APPRAISEMENTS AND ASPERITIES

AS TO SOME CONTEMPORARY WRITERS

FELIX E. SCHELLING, PH.D., LL.D.

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BY

FELIX E. SCHELLING

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The following articles first appeared in the columns of *The Evening Public Ledger* of Philadelphia to the proprietors of which I am indebted for permission to reprint them. Of the two chief words constituting the title, the first is far the more important; for it is better humbly to ascertain what a book is than to fall into asperities about it. Every review is an expression of opinion: that this opinion be honestly arrived at, is all that we can demand. Our range here is over the fields of poetry, fiction, the essay and the drama, with single excursions into biography, anthropology, philosophy and education. Where each subject stands by itself, classification is impossible. The order therefore is more or less haphazard.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Familiar Essay	9
"Personal Prejudices"	15
Our Miss Repplier	21
One of the Three Graces	27
The Quaintness of Mr. Crothers	33
The Terrible Mr. Goldring	39
The Man of the Happy Mean	45
"The Art of Biography"	50
"Potterism"	56
Joseph Conrad on Life and Letters	62
Theophrastus in Kansas	67
Carl Sandburg—Rebel?	73
Alfred Noyes and a Great Poetic Tradition	79
John Masefield and the Key Poetic	85
An Old Myth Revitalized	91
The Poetry of George E. Woodberry	96
As to American Drama	101
Mr. Drinkwater's "Mary Stuart"	108
New Music on the Eternal Triangle	114
"The Greatest Play since Shakespeare"	120
Guitry's "Deburau"	126
A Trenchant Satire on the War	131
No Improvement on Victor Hugo	138
"The Emperor Jones"	144
The Stage from Betterton to Irving	150
Another Volume of "Sherburne Essays"	157
A Sound British Critic	163
Some Forgotten Tales of Henry James	169
The Veritable Queen of English Fiction	175
The New Stone Age	181
A Breath of Fresh Air on Education	187
Professor Santayanna on American Opinion	193

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THE FAMILIAR ESSAY

"I HAVE read with delight the advance sheets of 'Adventures and Enthusiasms,' by E. V. Lucas." So wrote A. Edward Newton to a number of his friends before his recent departure to London, Johnson hunting—Dr. Samuel, dear reader, immersed in contemporary politics, not Hiram—and Mr. Newton added: "It is one of the most charming volumes of essays I have read in a long time." Even those of us who have a less perfect discernment for these delicate niceties of style and sentiment must appreciate the justice of this verdict of the pundit and add our less authoritative praise when Mr. Lucas has once made us his; and some of us have been such long since, from the time of our reading in his edition of the "Works and Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb," and from other pleasing volumes of his essays and collections in which good taste combines with scholarly judgment to bid the reader to the feast.

It is said that publishers shy at the word "essay;" but then publishers are a skittish tribe and shy easily. Certainly many a title tries to conceal or evade that dangerous word. I notice that Mr. Crothers' new volume is to be called "The Dame's School Experience and Other Sketches," this last word borrowed from the artists. Another evasion is "papers," abstracted from the lawyers. Indeed, this question of "What's in a name?" is not unimportant in beguiling the would-be reader and purchaser. Nor is he altogether wrong as to "essay," that sometime modest and deferential word, in which the humble writer asks you to receive these, his efforts, his attempts, not expecting too much. But this significance has long since evaporated into thin air, and an essay conveys to the uninitiated—and to the initiated now as well—the sense of a something dry, solid, lengthy and not to be trifled with. Mr. Lucas is happy in his title. We have all of us had adventures and unfortunate is he who has outlived his enthusiasms.

The essay is a delicacy for the aristocrat, the Brahmin among readers. Children and those in whom childhood is prolonged read for the story; and the "preternaturally good" read for edification, which, for the most part, they are sadly in need of. Practical people read for facts, although they may never arrive at a point at which

they actually recognize a fact when they meet one. And the romantic read impossible fiction or aureate poetry and lose themselves in unreality. I repeat that he who loves the essay—especially the familiar essay, as it is called—and letters, is the aristocrat, the Brahmin among readers, because he, above all others, has the taste of the connoisseur for delicate flavor, for fragrance, for aroma, that spirit which gives to our best essays a quality above the posturings of dramatists and novelists and the flutterings of poets, be they free or caged in verse.

After a reading of Mr. Lucas's "Adventures and Enthusiasms" I asked myself: What is there in these little chats on subjects (many of them, stern moralist, really trivial) that gives me, the reader, such an unalloyed pleasure? I cannot say that I have learned very much—something about the Man of Ross and Leach, the illustrator of Punch; the possible origin of that marine successor to old Father Neptune, Davy Jones and his renowned locker; the circumstance that the nautical descendants of Sir Francis Drake are still playing at bowls on the identical bowling green back of the Hoe at Plymouth (England, of course, we have no Hoes), on which Sir Francis was surprised while at his game with the news of the coming of the Spanish Armada. These are some of the curious

bits of information that remain, together with a few stories, not always quite so good as admirably well told. Even a recurrence to the list of contents, with my reading fresh in mind, does not seem much to help. "The Sparrows' Friend", "A Morning Call", "The Perfect Guest", "A Devonshire Inn" and the agreeable London rambles to Greenwich, Windsor, the Zoological Gardens, Kew, places to which we all go when in London: well, now, what is it that he has just been saying so agreeably about these old haunts of yours and mine? And that untenacious memory of the modern reader gives me no very definite answer. What it does give me is the general recollection of a very pleasant hour or two in exceedingly good company, and that, I cannot but think, is the fulfilment of the very beau ideal of the familiar essay.

It is always interesting, however at times disappointing, to meet the people whose books one has read. What would not some of us, who still harbor enthusiasms, as does Mr. Lucas, give to have met—not Dr. Johnson, he was not meetable, you went to him as to a sovereign loftily enthroned. No, decidedly not Dr. Johnson, nor the great Mr. Burke; but Oliver Goldsmith, in his peach-colored plush suit—old Noll was no beauty—or Dick Steele, when his cups had made him maudlin, and he was penning a

letter to "his dearest Prue," to deprecate a caudle lecture. What it would have been to have sat quietly in a corner when Coleridge asked Lamb, "Charles, have you ever heard me preach"? And Charles stuttering reply, "Sam-Sam-u-u-el, I have never heard you do anything else."

The familiar essay makes one familiar. Not many months ago I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Lucas and sitting beside him for a while. I can testify to the truth of his statement that he is a very good listener; for that day he listened to many of us, but repaid the multiplicity of our converse in the quality of his minor part in the conversation. I find that I cannot remember a single one of his many happy remarks, much less record the color of his eyes or, if he will pardon me the liberty, the plenty or paucity of his hair. I might guess at his age. His dress made no impression upon me. He was inconspicuously the gentleman, the polite man of the world, and I would recognize him in a minute should I be so happy as again to meet him. What I took away with me was the recollection of a very pleasant hour in exceedingly good company. The man here tallies precisely with his work.

Now this, it seems to me, is exactly the secret of the familiar essay and the reason why it is beloved of the aristocrat in reading, the Brah-

min aforesaid. Personality counts big no matter in what walk in life; but mere personality is not enough in the familiar essay. Somebody said something once about the Johnsonian manner to the effect that were Dr. Johnson to cause minnows to speak he would give them the utterance of whales or leviathans. A familiar essay is not an authoritative discourse, emphasizing the inferiority of the reader; and neither the learned, the superior, the clever nor overwitty, is the man who can "pull it off." An exhibition of pyrotechnics is all very fine; but a chat by a wood fire with a friend who can listen, as well as talk, who can even sit with you by the hour in congenial silence—this is better. When, therefore, we find a writer who chats with us familiarly about the little things that in the aggregate go to make up our experience in life, when he talks with you, not to show off, not to set you right, not to argue, above all not to preach, but to share his thoughts and sentiments, to laugh with you, moralize a bit with you, though not too much, take out of his pocket, so to speak, a curious little anecdote, or run across an odd little experience and share it pleasantly, enjoying it unaffectedly and anxious to have you enjoy it, too —when we have all this, we have the daintiest, the purest and the most delightful of all the forms of literature—the familiar essay.

"PERSONAL PREJUDICES"

"PERSONAL PREJUDICES." Could there be a more perfect, a more fitting title for a book of essays? Why, it is as obvious and as admirable as Columbus' immortal solution of the first step to the making of an omelet; for the essay is nothing if it is not personal, and what is so personal as prejudice? This is another glaring example of that prevalent impertinence, a tendency on the part of everybody to say our good things before we have had a chance to cerebrate them. And in this case it is not a mere man—one might stand that—but a lady, and from Boston. The sex is becoming more and more addicted to this disconcerting practice, and this title is far from the only instance of this sort of thing in this book. Much has been said in proverb and in fiction about woman as bound to have the last word. One could put up with that, but it is going a bit far likewise thus to insist on having the first word as well.

For example here is a humble reviewer who has been saying for years: "I never meet an Englishman to whom I take a particular fancy but what he turns out to be a Scotchman or an Irishman." And here comes along a lady from Boston who tells my story in this superior way. "An Englishman is never more soul-satisfying

than when he is a Scotchman." Notice how the subject is simplified by leaving out the Irishman. (English statesmen and New York politicians take notice.) Long residence in an Irish city like Boston would naturally suggest this. And then the essayist goes on blithely to praise Scottish tact and discretion, the like of which, she tells us, she has never met "outside of a petticoat," finding in the Scotchman's hereditary right to this article of apparel "an abbreviated excuse" for these virtues. It looks easy to do, but try it.

By her own avowal in a previous volume Mrs. Sturgis is very entertainingly a grandmother; it needed not the author's name nor such an avowal to disclose her sex. Femininity is written on every page of "Personal Prejudices"; or is it that personal prejudices are written on every page of femininity? But "from Boston, in Boston," rather troubles me. Mrs. Sturgis lives on Beacon street. To live on Beacon street is not exactly to hide one's light under a bushel. Many true Bostonians live and have lived on Beacon street, but does the veritable Bostonian tell you so? Boston deals not in works of supererogation. Still again, Mrs. Sturgis alludes more than once to her darling *Herald*. Transcript is Bostonese for the newspaper. Save Mohammed, there is no other

prophet. And a Sunday edition of any newspaper so littering the house that an orderly matron can never get the leisure to go to church! Does Boston refer to a Sunday paper or to abstinence from church-going, whatever actual practices may be? I am even more worried in this matter of Bostonian authenticity by an avowed dislike for gardens—not the dislike, but the avowal, by Mrs. Sturgis' unabashed confession that she does not say "tray" for "trait" —let Bryn Mawr note—and by the extraordinary circumstance that she alludes, even to a mere Bolshevist, as "my gentleman friend," an un-New England plethora of words where either "gentleman" or "friend" might serve, each being equally ironic.

However there are some characteristics of "Personal Prejudices" which, I confess, are dead against this agnosticism of mine. There is a charming assumption, referable to atmospheric conditions in Boston, to the effect that any trifle well talked about may make interesting conversation; and this assumption is abundantly proved in this book in the pleasing process. There is, once more, a perfect complaisancy as to the superiority of inhabitants of Boston,even as to the conduct of policemen—whose misconduct has made a Vice President for the United States—and a total oblivion as to whether the

reader might be interested in these parochial matters. And there are straws—like the spelling of "labour" with all the letters to which it can possibly be entitled, even in England—to indicate that meticulous nicety in spelling and pronunciation which no American affects a day to the south or west of Beacon Hill. The unfortunate foreign "gentleman friend" of socialistic leanings, for example, is rallied on his phonetic spelling of "cloes"; it is only the elect—and who knows not where abide the elect—who contrive to manipulate the theta and the sigma in this necessary word in such a wise as to delude themselves into the belief that they are pronouncing both of them.

But our shaft is shot and if it seem barbed, be it remembered that the only way to meet prejudice is with prejudice. Moreover, Mrs. Sturgis has a way with her prejudices which makes you wish that you might share them, and she has sensible reasons for many of them which are convincing to such as like to be wittily convinced. "For a woman to vote is for her to commit a sin." This should be a terrible deterrent to such of the sex as may be treading carelessly to the polls. But Mrs. Sturgis told us this less because of her conviction that voting adds an eighth cardinal sin to the menaces of feminine frailty than to create a pleasant dilemma in

which not to obey the constitution and vote, if you are a woman, becomes likewise a sin. Wherefore: "I have no objection to picking up the loose ends and polishing up a man's job when he has done his share, but with all the other things I have to do, I can see no reason why I should do his work as well as mine": a point well taken. Mrs. Sturgis has much to say which is sensible as well as clever about servants, on which topic the prudent man will hold his peace—and suffer. A certain remark of Mrs. Sturgis about Japanese servants should be repeated not on the Pacific coast, lest it lead to strained relations in the East. On house and home, on quality and equality and on differences and distinctions there are convictions and truths, as well as buttresses of preconception. Mrs. Sturgis' opinions on experts, building laws, ventilation, positive versus negative precept, hospitals and "democracy"should take other women to the polls to make her mayor of an even more perfect Boston than Boston is. "There have been class distinctions ever since Eve spanked Cain for unbrotherly action toward Abel" is the statement of no new truth; but it is a picturesque way of putting it, and deeply will many share Mrs. Sturgis' indignation as to the exclusion of such as labor with such brains as they have from that rising upper aristocracy, "the working classes."

In Mrs. Sturgis' search for a book which we are previleged to share she turns up many an old friend. Rollo, confounded little prig; Henry Kingsley, eclipsed by a more successful brother. "The Heir of Redclyffe"; among moderns, Mr. Archibald Marshall, who, as we knew him delightfully years ago, before fame claimed him, it is pleasant to hear once more approved. Mrs. Sturgis passes by De Morgan and Mr. Hewlett with a cold bow; one of them bores her—"Mr. Hewlett moves in quite different circles." When she reaches Mr. Shaw we have only: "I wasted no time over that gentleman; he is no friend of mine." Naturally Mrs. Sturgis would prefer Anthony Trollope. Now wouldn't it be nice if we could only swap prejudices once in a while? I have a few choice ones that I would like to be rid of. Mrs Sturgis might not unreluctantly part with some of hers; however, she wears them lightly and by way of ornament. Perhaps her chains and heirloom brooches are as precious to her as are our masculine scarf pins and cuff links and some of them as remotely inherited.

OUR MISS REPPLIER

IF our Miss Repplier had been born in Boston and, after the inveterate habit of the true Bostonian, had refused to live anywhere else, how New England would boast of her as a signal evidence of New England's chronic superiority in letters. Or, if Miss Repplier had not resisted so contentedly the lure of "the metropolis" which sweeps the arts and the crafts which are, would be and pretend to be, into its golden maw, there to extinguish them, how would New York proclaim to the world its discovery of the alertest, the sanest and the choicest of our American essayists? As it is, Miss Repplier has loyally elected to reside in Philadelphia and in consequence we take her as a matter of course. Ours is much the attitude of the father of Macaulay. Told that his son had carried off all the honors at Cambridge, he modestly replied: "That is precisely what was to be expected of the son of Zachary Macaulay." Told that that son had become the foremost parliamentarian of his time, its greatest historian and essayist, his answer was: "I could expect no less." It was not in the power of a Thomas Babington Macaulay to surprise a Zachary; nor can a son or a daughter of Philadelphia unruffle our superb complaisancy—or is it our supine indifference?

The range and the variety of the essay is sometimes lost sight of. It may be a chat over a wood fire about trivialities, pleasing and forgettable. Or it may be much else, and it may strike deep into the heart of some matter—I detest the word problem—of momentary importance and, like a searchlight, strike back into the past of experience or forward into the future of speculation. Miss Repplier, from the brilliancy of her wit and her incomparable power of illuminating whatever she writes with it, is sometimes mistaken for a mere humorist, a master in mosaic, who would rather spear a jest, as some one misprinted it, than spare a friend. But in the now considerable body of her work—which he who does not know has ill kept up with the best commentary on our American thought—Miss Repplier has always a sane, an essentially serious, an open-minded point of view, a point of view moreover which walks not in the ranks of unthinking majorities nor prides itself on the other hand on singularity for singularity's sake. With all her raillery and mastery of ridicule, Miss Repplier is always on the side of the angels.

"Points of Friction" is a happy title for a series of papers which deal with our current vagaries of thought and comment on things as various as woman, prohibition, spiritism, sentimentality, the misuses of money, of humor and

optimism, the decay of conservatism and the like. It is refreshing to find an author unwilling to be bound by that silly unwritten agreement which banishes from our conversation and allusion any word about the war. It is refreshing too, to find Miss Repplier not wholly satisfied with things as we have contrived to malform them in our post-bellum antics, political and other.

It is a strange obsession of the time that because we can dash about from place to place with a celerity heretofore undreamed and communicate our foolish thoughts to each other at the trifling expense of all privacy we are therefore wiser and better than all the ages. And a contempt for the past follows in lives so occupied with the trivial present that we have no time to learn. In "The Virtuous Victorian" Miss Repplier delightfully turns the tables on our condescending portrayal of an age, an intellectual, and literary equality with which, with all our accomplishment, we dare not claim. In like spirit is the essay on "Living with History." with its appeal to the larger perspective, which is our birth-right, and the discard of which leads to so many of our vagaries in politics, religion and education.

Timely, too, are the reminders that there have been other things than the love of gold to stir the passions of men, and sway the world—

things such as "great waves of religious thought, great births of national life, great discoveries, great passions and great wrongs." Could it be that this discreditable orgy of petty extortion and organized greed which now possesses us, this loss of the sense of honor and proportion in public as well as in private life, is, after all, only the reaction to the lax string after the tension that made us all more or less patriots? It is charity to the age to believe it.

In another place Miss Repplier pays her respects to our contemporary American hero, "the athletic millionaire," who from an office boy or elevator man has become a luminary in high finance, and she wickedly points out his laureate, who from his pulpit expatiates upon his patron's virtues, especially his affability and kindliness to each of his fellow citizens in whom he condescendingly recognizes, after all, "one of God's creatures," like himself. Miss Repplier is never better in her merry mechante raillery of pretension and sycophancy. The golden calf, she tells us, "has never changed since it was first erected in the wilderness, the original model hardly admitting of improvement." And how delicious is the palpable hit: "There are Americans who appear to love their country for much the same reason that Stevenson's 'child' loves the 'friendly cow':

"'She gives me cream with all her might
To eat with apple tart.'"

And bettering her allusion in the turn which she gives it, as Miss Repplier usually does, she concludes: "When the supply of cream runs short the patriot's love runs shorter." And "he holds violent mass-meetings to complain of the cow, of the quality of the cream and of its distribution."

There are no more delightful papers than those on "Woman Enthroned," "The Strayed Prohibitionist" and "Dead Authors." This last warns us of our impending fate as readers when authors who have gone before and those who begin authorship in the next world shall communicate their ceaseless endeavors. Miss Repplier has noticed, with some other observers, that the new spiritism has added to the horrors of the afterworld one never suggested even by the imaginations of Dante or Milton, and this is our complete loss, after death not only of all our talents, but even of our common sense. She has noticed likewise that the spirit world is not notable for the gift of prophecy and seldom forestalls the newspapers. As a woman Miss Repplier recognizes—as many a man has recognized, but dare not avow it—that equality of man and woman involves equality of responsibility as well as equality of opportunity.

And once again—also somewhat like a man, did he dare or could he say it half so well—Miss Repplier actually questions the certainty of the immediate regeneration of the world upon universal woman's suffrage. Some of Miss Repplier's sisters will have to look into this; it will never do. "The Strayed Prohibitionist" runs the gamut of drink, strong and sweet, through the literature of the ages, but so deftly and so trippingly that we are never oppressed by an allusiveness which is little short of amazing. But there is solid thought for more than the author queried in this: "I am convinced that if Mr. Galsworthy's characters ate and drank more they would be less obsessed by sex." It would be difficult to find a wiser summary of the whole law of prohibition than Miss Repplier's quotation from Milton: "They are not skilful considerers of human things who imagine to remove sin by removing the matter of sin."

ONE OF THE THREE GRACES

IT HAS been my happy fortune to view for review, successively and of late, the estimable essays of two ladies, or to put it in elder wise, the essays of two estimable ladies—Mrs. Clipston Sturgis, in whom Boston rejoices, and our own Miss Repplier, whom, in true Philadelphia fashion, we appreciate, but not nearly enough. To complete this embarrassment of riches there comes to me now a third—and no minor third either—in Miss Winifred Kirkland, to complete the triad. And while my case is not quite that of fabled Paris of Troy, asked to judge between three goddesses, as well might one say, which is the loveliest of the graces, as determine, which of these skillful craftswomen in the delicate art of the essay is to carry off the palm from her sisters. However, I see no reason why the palm should be carried off or even paraded, and, remembering what comparisons are, they are easily evaded. A more liberal lover am I than was ever doughty Captain Macheath, of "The Beggers' Opera," who could only have been happy with either. In this matter of essays, be they but written in the manner of these, and I can be happy with any or them all.

Miss Kirkland, who will be remembered by many as the author of a striking essay in the

Atlantic not very long since, "The New Death," entitles her new volume "The View Vertical," in a clever introductory essay, contrasting the horizontal attitude of the body which was ours in our amœban days back in the primeval slime, with our gradual rise through the ape to the human's vertical or upright. It is a pleasing fancy that we stand thus, as men and women, facing life, to view things from the vantage of such stature as may be ours. And it may be said and truly that Miss Kirkland's own view is always the view forthright, frank, kindly, illuminated with a wit in decorous control and warmed with a humor that reaches humor's best extreme at times in tenderness of feeling. What pleasing titles are some of these. Miss Kirkland's former volume was called "The Joys of Being a Woman," and Mrs. Sturgis indulged in "Random Reflections of a Grandmother." Moreover, how these our graces in the literary arts, are shutting mere miserable man out in the cold. They have us hopelessly beaten at the game; we who know only the neglected condition of being a man and, as grandfathers, are ourselves little more than reflections. Among the delectable titles of Miss Kirkland are "Confessions of a Scene Maker," "Stylish Stouts," "A Soliloquy on Sorting" and "Drudgery as a Fine Art," delightful in substance as well as in

title. There is not one of these which does not subtly glory in the joy of being a woman. I will not say that only a woman can make a scene, though assuredly none can make one more successfully. "Stylish Stouts" suggests that we turn the other way lest we pry into business which is none of ours. It is only in drudgery, man's proper portion, that we share, and none of us can approach the art of the charming woman set forth by Miss Kirkland in this essay.

Some time since a polite publisher returned the manuscript of a book of essays with a new excuse: It was too disjointed in subject matter. Table talk, a dictionary and the essay, these are the three things in life—about the only ones left—which have not been organized into consistency. One of the reasons for the fabled Mrs. Partington's fondness for dictionaries was that in the reading of them and of encyclopedias she found such a lively change of subject. Miss Kirkland's "Views Vertical" are ever consistent in their verticality, but her subject matter is as changing in mood and as varied in theme as even the heart of Mrs. Partington could wish. Disjointed forsooth! Why shouldn't we be disjointed? Whenever a man writes a book, does he enter into a contract to write a sermon or a disquisition, a treatise and drag a dismal, clanking chain of logic? Do we have to put off

human nature the moment we get into print and be consistent, sequent and disquisitional? I am glad that women have undertaken to right this wrong, too, among the many wrongs they are hunting out now that they have their rights. Let us have the inalienable right of the essayist to say whatever she at least likes, to change her subject as often as her gown or her bonnet and decorate it as riotously.

If I were asked to name the seven cardinal virtues of the essay—which like the cardinal virtues that sustain mankind and in their perfect conjunction give rise to saintship—I should say that they are humor, ease, brevity and charm, and these be of the first order—for there is precedence even among cardinals—and, in second rank, wit, irony and paradox. Egotism or personality, you ask? All essays are about "myself," that is why, out of sympathy, we like them. Learning? Valuable in an essay in proportion as you contrive to conceal it. Miss Kirkland's humor is pervading; it is a quality inherent, not a thing sought and worn as an external decoration. Take the perfect little essay "On Adopting One's Parents," founded on the paradox of an inversion of life's usual relationship; its method is delicate humor, shot with wit and deepening into a genuine sentiment which warms the heart as we read. "Hold Izzy" is

based on an incident none the less true, we may well believe, that it is preposterous, in which a lady, the customer of a Jewish storekeeper, has Izzy, "a large and lusty babe," impulsively deposited in her arms by the father in his zeal to find something which the customer has come in to buy. But the humorous incident becomes a homily: "Some people are foreordained to hold Izzy. Some people are foreordained to have their Izzy held. I have held Izzy. I have had my Izzy held for me, but I am wondering: have I ever been Izzy myself."

"Family Phrases" gives us a vivid glimpse into the intimacies of a rector's household which it would have been a delight and a privilege to have known. It is written all over with charm; and as to personality, if you miss it where it is everywhere, you are a very dull reader. I am not sure that I should not commend Miss Kirkland for her command of the virtue of brevity as much as for anything else. Brevity is a sense—rather an intuition—for the certain evasion of the word too much. Few possess it; even fewer practice it. And more pictures are spoiled by the line too many than by the line too few. Toward the end, Miss Kirkland's volume gravitates into books—though "gravitate" is not precisely the word. Our friend, Mr. Newton, may look to his laurels after a perusal of "The

Man in the Dictionary," none other to be sure than Mr. Newton's own Dr. Johnson. And "Shakespeare and the Servant Problem" is alike a contribution to the appreciation of Shakespeare and to a very pressing contemporary social problem. I like an essayist who sends me back to old friends. I shall read George Meredith's "Egotist" next time with my eye on young Crossjay, thanks to "A Boy in a Book"; and I may even get back again to "Robinson Crusoe." As to Jane Austen, thither I need no beguilement. In an adjustment of words of Izaak Walton: He who knows not Jane Austen nor Miss Kirkland's charming essay on "Victuals and Drink in Jane Austen's Novels" deserves not to know either.

THE QUAINTNESS OF MR. CROTHERS

AN ingenious friend of mine has divided books into two very definite and quite exclusive classes, the one of the other. These are the plus books and the minus books. This is not the same thing as the long books and the short ones; nor yet a matter dependent on the major or minor reputations of authorships. A plus book is a book the reading of which leaves the reader the better, the happier, the more hopeful; a book which appeals to what is good in you and lifts you a bit out of the slough and despondency of the world. A minus book is one which leaves the reader deprived, if not depraved, a book which clouds the sun and deafens the ear to the singing of birds and the prattle of children. A minus book may be true—most damnably true—it may be brilliant, imaginative, compelling, convincing; all this makes its minus quality the more certain, for it is art enlisted in the service of the enemy of mankind, who is always elbowing us into the slough of despond. Nor is a plus book that deadly thing, an improving book; for he who counts his gains in his reading like a tradesman the balance of his ledger, should be deprived of the sweet uses of literature. A plus book is one that adds something to the clarity of our vision or to our charity toward men. It is a

book which helps, which vitalizes and ennobles; not one which debilitates and unnerves.

In a new book by Mr. Crothers we are always sure of pleasure by the way, for he carries the torches of his quaint and original wit wherever he goes. We are sure likewise of something else, and that is of getting something tangible and to the good, not in the way of the brass counters of information, perhaps—for Mr. Crothers uses a coinage of a higher denomination and of a different metal—but in the way of a clearer, a kindlier, a saner view of the topic under discussion.

What an excellent thing it would be if we could catch some one of our busy "educators" and compel him to read and ponder such as essay as Mr. Crothers' "Dame School of Experience." Therein the author visits an ancient schoolhouse, older than the little red one which we sentimentalize about, presided over by "a withered dame" who discourses tartly on education from troglodyte times to our no very different own. After considerable fencing, noting which our "educator" might learn much from that past into which he is too busy to look, the author comments: "You have really modern ideas after all. You believe in learning by doing. 'Not exactly,' is the reply. 'At least not by doing what they (the pupils) are told to do. My pupils are always doing something or other—and

it is generally wrong. They have more activity than good sense. The world is full of creatures that are doing things without asking why. You can't educate a grasshopper. He is too busy hopping. The peculiarity of man is that sometimes you can induce him to stop and think." Sometimes. Here is a thought for an "educator": "The real teacher is a radical reformer who habitually uses the most conservative means to attain revolutionary ends." Notice the antithesis between "the real teacher" and "the educator," who, if Mr. Crothers will forgive a parody of his words, is a timorous standpatter who incessantly employs revolutionary methods to attain mediocre results.

Here is a passage from "The Teacher's Dilemma," on a subject much misunderstood: "Up to a certain point we all believe in the process of leveling up. We would raise the grade of the highway till it gives a convenient approach to our front door. Any uplifting of the road beyond that would leave us in a hole. We cease to regard the public improvement as a betterment and bring suit for damages." This, in its directness, its truth, humor and point, is distinctive of the original and effective method of Mr. Crothers. His teaching is much by parable. Has our "educator" discovered anything better since last Tuesday morning?

"Every Man's Natural Desire to be Somebody Else" searches into those dreams unrealized, those potentialities fated to remain such which lie hidden in the consciousness of us all. "The Perils of the Literate" finds in our very knowledge and reading the cause of many of our most cherished prejudices. The catechism in popular historical opinion as based on the prejudices of reading is well put and it may well give us pause to inquire, each of himself: "Do you really know any London except that of Dickens?" or "To what extent has your older history of England been dependent on drama or fiction?"

A droll idea—one thoroughly characteristic of Mr. Crothers—is that of a spiritual adviser of efficiency experts; and who could need any spiritual advice more sadly than he whose worship is of the great god, Get-things-done? Not many years since the dean of a well known college boasted of a monthly session of his faculty in which, placing "the curve of ideal efficiency" (whatever that may mean) upon a blackboard, he compared with it the curve of each member of his unhappy official family, praising, admonishing, as the case might be and, as he put it, "maintaining a grip on things"—and on far more than things. Happily does Mr. Crothers say in another connection: "In dealing with a thing, you must first find out what it is, and then act

accordingly. But with a person, you must find out what he is and then carefully conceal from him the fact that you have made the discovery." Mr. Crothers' advice to the efficiency experts is sadly needed and nothing could be neater than the satire of the experts' extension of his "methods" for the shoveling of clay by Sobrinsky and Flaherty, with the noted capacity of shovel and wheelbarrow and the time needed to move a hundred cubic feet of the same, to Goodwin and Brown, transferrers of literature by means of daily themes into the minds of so many freshmen in a given period of "loading and dumping."

In one of the most significant of these essays, Mr. Crothers pays attention to that recurrent topic, the Pilgrim Fathers. There is much more than pleasantry in his criticism of our prevalent extension of the motives and ideals which brought about the American Revolution backward into Puritan times where they do not belong. And the vivid picture of the Puritan spirit which he draws, especially in its emphasis on the state and its certainty as to its divine mission, is well brought into contrast with the vastly different ideals of the political equality of man which animated the politics of the Revolution. Mr. Crothers employs his learning, like his wit, in the interests of his subject, airing neither, but lighting his path with the steady

glow of the one and the momentary superillumination of the other, as required.

A timely word, too, is that on the "Unpreparedness of Liberalism," in which the author calls seriously into question the notion that it is to the revolutionist alone that we owe human progress. Wisely does he admonish us that you cannot tear down your house and continue to live in it, or leave it unrepaired and not be ultimately driven out of it. Moreover, it is not the house that is in need of repairing, it is the man himself; and to kill him or leave him to his fate, neither is to cure him. Like all true idealists, Mr. Crothers is discouraged with the surge of materialism, selfishness and pettiness which is now englufing our struggling world. And American leadership in all this is not enchanting. But steadfast, as a man of high hope, he writes of us as "in the dawn of a new day" in which, true to our essential nature, we shall yet take up our responsibilities, international as well as national and parochial.

THE TERRIBLE MR. GOLDRING

IS a man to be judged by what he reads—at least by what he reads in public? Or is that "a question not to be asked"? In riding about on commuters' trains and others in America and in England, I have noticed a contrast in the nature of the reading of the average passenger. A five o'clock suburban in America is a wilderness of the afternoon papers, which flourishes as the leaves of Vallombrosa for four or five stations and then dies down into talk. On trains set for a longer journey our magazines of entertainment bud forth, making a chair-car a parterre of color. But rarely does man or woman read a bound book; to open such is to proclaim oneself "a highbrow," which appears to be about as low a state as man can fall to. In England the daily newspapers do not appear to be so commonly read on trains—at least of the better class, and on longer journeys substantial books are often read with apparent assiduity—for your Englishman would rather read a dull book than adventure conversation with a stranger. On a journey from Plymouth to London a few years ago, I counted a round dozen of my fellow passengers reading bound books, and having the curiosity of a Christopher Morley in this particular, I succeeded in ascertaining that most of

them were novels, and moreover current novels of the nature and contents of which I remain impenitently ignorant.

Before receiving Douglas Goldring's "Reputations" "to be reviewed," an advance circular came to me which whetted my curiosity. It seems that the book has "created a sensation," it has been acrimoniously attacked and vigorously defended; it has become in consequence that enviable thing, "a brisk seller"; authentic authorship has always its foundations in the seller. And I naturally looked into "Who's Who," wherein are gathered, together with the famous, so many to whom, on inquiry, the owls of oblivion will shortly echo back " Who-Who"! And behold; the name of Goldring, unlike that of Abu-ben-Adhem, did not lead the rest; it was not there. An Oxford man, an editor, subeditor and publisher of several journals, defunct or still surviving, the author of "a very charming book of poems entitled 'Streets,' " of books of travel, of a play, and thirty-one years of age—and not in "Who's Who"! Our suspicions as to the decayed internal condition of Denmark must be extended to England, particularly when we glean, as we may from "Reputations," that Mr. Goldring is an international socialist in constitutional disagreement with Mr. Lloyd George and severely critical of Mr. Wells, when we hear

that Mr. Goldring is "secretary of the Clarte movement," which wise people will know all about, but as to which a humble reviewer of books—only books—must confess to a supreme ignorance. I have not been able to scrape together much more about Mr. Goldring; for not being in "Who's Who," there is no record of his favorite sport. From "Reputations," however I should infer that it is not war, unless it be carried on by way of reviews.

"Reputations" is a well-written collection of papers, less on matters of moment than on things of the moment. The appreciation of the late James Elroy Flecker is timely, interesting and, allowing for its contemporaneousness and wholly creditable bias of friendship, just and fair. "Reputations" has in it much wit and an abundance of clever hitting which one might enjoy the better were he nearer the ropes. Whether Mr. Goldring has really administered the knockout blow to the reputations of several of his small novelist victims, it is quite impossible to say at this distance. Due to the above-mentioned American habit of reading the newspapers instead of contemporary minor fiction—in which we are perhaps not much further from reality. I do not find myself bristling with intelligence when I hear of "the author of 'Tarr,' " nor do I feel sympathetically exas-

perated with the "Outburst on Gissing." I gather from Mr. Goldring that his friend, Mr. D. H. Lawrence—a poet whom I know and admire for much that is sound and vital—is the only immediately contemporary writer of novels who can be safely accepted. And I am in no mood to argue the question. I am willing to accept the pungent criticisms of Messrs. Mackensie, Cannon and Walpole, the three "Georgian novelists" whom Mr. Goldring singles out for his especial censures, and I find the paper on "Clever Novels" very pleasant reading, like a book of travels into some heartily unimportant country whither I should never care to go. I suppose that the sundry people who are mawled in this paper—they and their friends—must feel bad about it. But it seems afar off and trivial to one deprived of the joy of living in the purlieus of literary London, one who, moreover, would rather read something else than third-rate fiction.

Apparently they take these things quite seriously in England. Were it anywhere else we might be tempted to call it provincial. However Mr. Goldring has some happy phrases: "A fringe of distinguished dull dogs who wrote books"; "a deafening silence broken only by the sound of the white rabbits of criticism scuttling to cover"; "A writer is never so much a man

and a brother (or a woman and a sister) as when he (or she) is behaving like a toad"; and the positively brilliant designation of Mr. Arnold Bennett as "the Gordon Selfredge of English letters"; and if you do not know what that means, kind-hearted reader, it is worth a journey to London to find out. Mr. Goldring has a pleasant little story of an interview with Mr. Watts-Dunton; of a momentary undignified contact with the great George Bernard; and there is a delightful anecdote of an Irish lion in letters and his roaring on psycho-analysis before a bevy of entranced schoolmarms "convoked from Girton College"; but it is too profane to repeat.

Mr. Goldring hates war, which does not seem very remarkable; he apparently also hates most war poetry, in which we heartily concur. He excepts that, however, of Mr. Sasoon, Mr. Sitwell and others. He agrees with somebody parenthetically, the matter being thus best disposed of, that Swinburne, is a minor poet. He does not say it, but we infer that major poets only write in the present. However, he has some creditable likings, about which he is deprecatory, for certain old things Victorian. With the courage of youth he defends certain "low tastes," as he calls them, of his own and of others, among them a liking for detective stories, for books of travel—one wonders why—and for the

revue (we call that sort of thing "musical" comedy). Mr. Goldring even takes up the cudgels in defense of the chorus girl and justifies the admiration which youth becomingly feels for her sedulous industry in her "difficult art," her good form in it, so to speak, and her other good points—although this last hardly seems the word. Best of all I like the enticing little essay, "Redding on Wines," though tell it not in Volstead. It is agreeable to see the young active, interested in these things which they like and expressive of this precious moment in which we are now living. Certainty as to all things mundane at the least, sweeping divisions (as Mr. Goldring confesses was Flecker's as to poets into "magnificent" and such as write "godforsaken muck"), oblivion as to the past, dilation of things present—such are among the prerogatives of youth. Mr. Goldring is less "young" than many of his brothers and he is quite engaging at times in the act of dragging people about. His views, too, as to many of these little matters are altogether just. But as to these presentists of the unimportant and their often cubicular deliverances, is perspective to become wholly a lost art?

A MAN OF THE HAPPY MEAN

IN the daily course of our lives there are two areas, so to speak, in the community which attract public attention. There is first the mass by its mere mass in which we may find much that we could wish were otherwise, but the honest contemplation of which, when all has been said, should leave us undismayed as to human nature. Secondly, there are those who stand distinguished for effort and what we call prominence, it may be in public life, in letters, in society, even in conspicuous wrongdoing. Between these two flows the main current of our American life, composed of those who are neither submerged nor partially submerged in the struggle for existence, nor yet of their contrasted fellows who have reached a momentary gleam in the sunshine of repute, whether to their fame or their scandal.

And these quiet, serene and comfortable folk of the centre are the very mainstay of our culture and our civilization. They never descend into the morasses of radicalism, nor tempt dangerous agnostic heights. It would be unjust to class them with the standpatters who encumber the road with their frequent stallings; for their motion is honestly forward and they keep to the middle of the road. The folk of the centre be-

lieve in God and, to their credit be it said, try to take a kindly and practical Christianity into their lives. They respect the past without prying into it; they live in the present—which is the only sane way in which to live; and they look forward hopefully to the future, in which they may feel just a little too confident of their own salvation, though it cannot be denied that they hope—just a little against hope, a very little—that others may be saved likewise.

The "Life and Letters of the late Hamilton W. Mabie" is an interesting book, biographically and socially. From one point of view Mabie's was a singularly uneventful career. There is no uncertainty, no struggle in it. The reasonable comforts, excellent education, opportunity, all were his, and all were grasped honestly and employed to the full. Industry with the just fruits of the harvest, service cheerfully accepted and faithfully performed, achievement and recognition and hosts of friends, all these too were his and deservedly his; Mabie's was an integrity that knew no swerving, a sweet reasonableness that allayed friction rather than avoided it, a hopeful cheerfulness that got much out of life which foreboding and discontent lose. It would be difficult to imagine a more congenial life than was Mr. Mabie's, that is to a man of his temperament; the editor of an influential

magazine of liberal Christian opinion, a harmonious coworker for good with men like Dr. Lyman Abbott and later ex-President Roosevelt, a platform lecturer—nearly if not quite the last of the interesting older type—greatly in request and welcomed wherever he went, prominent in the service of a reasonable churchmanship, a progressive in education and liberal in politics, and a writer whose books were always timely and pleasantly written and read by thousands—such a career is as enviable as its success was deserved.

This book discloses many pleasant intimacies and friendships, from a momentary contact as a student with Emerson and later with Lowell and an editorial intimacy with the late President Roosevelt in the latter years of his life, through abiding friendships with the poets, Stedman and Aldrich, and our great novelist, Howells and with Burroughs, Henry van Dyke and Woodberry the last two of whom are still happily with us. A man who could have inspired such varied and such faithful friendships had in him much to warm the hearts of men. And such was undoubtedly true of Mabie. Few who have had to do even remotely with letters have failed in these latter years to have met or at least to have heard Mr. Mabie. He was the happiest and most tactful of presiding officers, fit and graceful in what he had to say and appealing

always to what was best and kindest in human nature. I have personally but one trivial little anecdote of Mr. Mabie. He was here in Philadelphia on one occasion to lecture and in some way I was conducting him somewhere in the wilds of West Philadelphia beyond even that remote region to which the University of Pennsylvania has since extended. It was spring and the grass was growing—alas! it must be confessed—between the bricks of the pavement on which we walked. Rather to disarm critical New York than for any other reason, I remarked that it was only too true that the grass grew in the streets of Philadelphia. And at that moment a tiny snake about the size of an angleworm wiggled across our way; whereupon Mr. Mabie said, "Yes, and I am sorry to see that there are snakes in it," and he seemed really sorry despite the twinkle in his eye.

It is early to estimate the service of the late Mr. Mabie as an author, if we are talking, as is the wont, of that fine thing, services to posterity. If we are talking of the present, which is wiser as well as more pertinent, it is much to have served the contemporary needs of the quiet, serene and comfortable folk of the centre, the readers of the *Outlook*, for a generation and to have served them so faithfully and so well. There have been more brilliant Lives of Shake-

speare than that of Mr. Mabie, few so sympathetic and so sincere. There have been books on nature, of literary appreciation and of spiritual admonition which the pundits of criticism may rate above those of Mabie, but it is doubtful if many of them so adequately and so wholesomely served their immediate purpose. The writings of Hamilton Mabie perturbed and troubled nobody. They led many to a kindlier and saner attitude toward life, and they strengthened a beautiful confidence which it is well to know still lingers in quiet places that all is working out to the good. Allowing for an ethical trend in Mabie which the English essayist ventured not, I like to think of the work of Hamilton Mabie in the terms which Leigh Hunt, once used as to his own cheerful, easy, adequate prose: "These essays of mine were never intended to be more than birds singing in the trees." Is there anything sweeter, truer, more pertinent than wholesome gladness in a world which sadly needs it? Gladness, hopefulness, helpfulness and the happy mean. Honor to the memory of him who so maintained them.

"THE ART OF BIOGRAPHY"

IT might be difficult to find a more attractive subject than this, the art of biography, not a mere enumeration of that enormous category of books, those written about other people, but a talk on the manner, the nature, the art of the thing. Delivered originally in the shape of lectures on the Barbour-Page Foundation at the University of Virginia, Mr. William Roscoe Thayer has contrived to give to his little book the charm that belongs to the familiar essay while losing none of the meat of a topic not to be mooted except on the basis of a scholarship both broad and sound.

Biography is in a sense an outgrowth of history; and without cavil be it said that biography is always close in its allegiance to fiction. Historians are still much agog over the momentous question how to write history. Is the narrative of a series of events, or the narrative of a man's life, to be regarded in the nature of a map or in the nature of a picture? Do we read the past as we lay out a journey, the chief object being that we may find our path and not go astray at the wrong turning? Or should we read, somewhat at least, as many would prefer to walk or to ride abroad, for beauty and significance of scene and the exhilaration of motion?

In a map you can identify this village and that hillside and determine with accuracy the relations of the topography of the country at large. In a picture you lose most of these particularities, but in place you have light and shadow and atmosphere out of which comes the recognition of reality. Mr. Thayer has some valuable pages on what might be called the three volume modern statesmen series of biographies, in which variety of "life" the map is meticulously drawn in every petty and trivial detail and the subject is seen as in a glass darkly. The case of Mrs. Charles Kingsley's life of her eminent husband should be kept in mind by those who, under the stress of example and for hire, write long lives. She reduced her two volume book to one and it is surprising how much was gained in the reduction.

It has been suggested above that biography is close in its nature to fiction. This last is one of those troublesome words which can hardly be employed without a double or a threefold meaning. To tell a thing which never happened as if it had actually occurred may be either art or falsehood. It may be both. DeFoe is credited with an unexcelled power in "grave and imperturbable lying." But DeFoe was likewise an artist; and many an occurrence of the novelists', the dramatists' or the poets' fiction, though never an actual fact, is truer in the large than are often

the recurring falsities of life. The old-fashioned historians, Thucydides and Livy, always put a fine rhetorical speech into the mouths of leaders before the sounding of a charge. This is sometimes very absurd, but when, as often in the former of these great writers, these speeches and their like in other situations are nicely calculated to reveal the personality of the speaker, his point of view on the occasion and the like, we have art, not lying. Such outworn methods biographical are scarcely as reprehensible as our weary marshaling of "all the facts," with the result of a wooden image instead of the portraiture of a man.

Mr. Thayer's long experience as a historian and his distinguished success as well in the writing of biography give to his words in appraisement and on the practice of his art a peculiar authority. It is good, therefore, to have our faith in the pre-eminence of Plutarch's "Lives" for antiquity and Boswell's "Johnson" for our own day so unmistakably reaffirmed. It is better still to have our own somewhat nebulous arguments on these subjects so ably and authoritatively re-enforced. We hear from the Shakespeareans that Plutarch alone of all his sources was the one which Shakespeare could not better at all times; and that despite the fact that the old dramatist read his life of Caesar and of

Marc Antony only in an English translation of a French translation of a Latin translation of a Greek original. When we add to this that Plutarch himself wrote long after the waning of "the glory that was Greece" and "the grandeur that was Rome," the freshness of his material, its vitality and power become the greater marvel. Mr. Thayer finds, among much else, that Plutarch's power lies largely in his defining each of his personages with a daylight clarity, in the circumstance that he was a great and wholesome moralist, and in his coming into his art most happily before the world had turned to introspection and become more interested in how one thing becomes something else, than in either thing in itself.

To medieval biography the author gives no disproportionate space. His words of Eginhard's "Life of Charlemagne" invite us back to that important, but forgotten, bit of biography, which is conspicuous among biographical writings for its artistic brevity. In three famous works the author finds medieval biography well typified: they are De Joinville's life of the saintly knight, Louis IX, the beautiful altruistic "Fioretti or Little Flowers" of Saint Francis and the "Imitation of Christ," that notable tractate on the pressing question "How shall I save my own soul?" Another source for Shakespeare, Cavendish's

"Life of Cardinal Wolsey," bridges us over by way of Roper's "Life of Sir Thomas More," and Izaak Walton's delightful "Lives," to modern times. To voice a personal taste, I could wish that there had been more room for autobiography, though that is really a very different subject; and I miss two important and favorite old books, the omission of which I confess none the less might be readily defended. They are Fulke Greville's "Life of Sir Philip Sidney," which is a "life" and likewise a great deal more, and the delectable "Autobiography" of Lord Herbert of Cherbury.

On modern biography this little book is exceedingly suggestive. It has always been a matter of wonder that the greatest of all English biographers, James Boswell, should have been the coxcomb that he was, and the contrasted portraits of Boswell as drawn respectively by Macaulay and by Carlyle have been time out of mind matter of comment. Boswell was a coxcomb, but a sheer fool does not write the greatest biography in the English language. Boswell is often accredited with being the first biographer to document his case and let the subject tell his own story. This is not quite wholly true and when Dr. Johnson did tell his own story in his "Autobiography," he made a poor fist of it. Boswell was really a splendid literary artist

endowed with a marvelous sense of proportion, howsoever some have said that he did not know a triviality as such when he saw one. And again, Boswell was in love with his subject, and the wit, the learning, the odd and distinguished personality of the great Cham of letters made him a peculiarly happy subject for minute portraiture. These are some of the reasons why Boswell will outlive the biography of that greater man, Carlyle, told malevolently, if not dishonestly, by Froud, or other notable "lives," such as that of Tennyson, related by his son, or that of Scott, by Lockhart, a son-in-law, admirable as this latter assuredly is. Relatives are congenitally too near to view a biographical subject in a true perspective. There should be a law against the dragging out of any man's lares and penates by such as overloved or overenvied him. To that last phrase of the biographical sketch, "he was happy even in his death," is to be added another, "rare as violets in winter's snow," "He was blessed in his biographer."

"POTTERISM"

"POTTERISM." The word is an inspiration. We have wanted it now this many a day; for it is a short cut over the fields for a thing which we have had to go around to get at; a neat cover into which to roll up a bundle of ideas which have been dangling loose for a long time. And what is "Potterism?" Like most words it roots in several directions. Let a suggestion suffice. A potter is obviously one who makes pots or jugs, usually of clay; and clay—which is much the stuff out of which men and women are made as well—is an unctuous, unstable, shapable material with which vessels of various kinds may be fashioned, baked and half-baked; and, even when finally glazed and painted, they remain fragile and are easily broken.

A famous text, the source of which, knowing reader, is not the Bible, reads: "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." You may preach a sermon on it, Mr. Minister, or adorn a peroration with it, Mr. Orator, especially if you do not happen to know what it means. Now this "touch" is not what careless pulpit eloquence often makes it, the innate nobility, the common humanity of man, that which makes each of us one of the universal human brotherhood. This is pretty, but it is not true.

The touch of nature is really what the theologian knows as original sin, what you and I call "the old Adam" in each of us; for the "touch" is the taint of human fallibility, the weakness which leaves each one of us, if the truth be told when all is said, not much better than his neighbor. This is true though I confess that it is notpretty. But what has this to do with "Potterism?" Shakespeare's "one touch of nature" is "Potterism."

"Potterism," the book, is a story of now, in which the figures are so typical that they assume a universal truth. The book is well written, at times brilliantly. Apothegm and epigram piled on epigram and apothegm make much of it excellent reading. Somewhat less successful is the effort to make various parts of the story appear the utterances of individual characters, but this is not important to the general plan, which is well carried out. The real essence of the book is satire of our muddling, superficial, self-seeking preposterous modern civilization, which is bantered, laughed at, shown up and mocked as it deserves. But very unlike many such books, "Potterism" neither brings us a cure-all, which turns out to be as preposterous as what it ridicules, nor does it conclude either in despair or in some faint-hearted consolation, religious or social, that means nothing. It is one of the

merits of this book that it leaves us wholesomely unconsoled.

"Potterism," we are told amongst much else, is "mainly an Anglo-Saxon disease, worst of all in America, that great home of commerce, success and the boosting of the second rate." "Potterism" welcomes prosperity and ugliness, propriety and cant. "The Potterite has the kind of face which is always turned away from facts * * hard, jolly facts with clear, sharp edges, that you can't slur or talk away." "Potterism" has no use for them. It appeals over their heads to prejudices and sentiment." "Potterism" is all for short and easy cuts and showy results. It plays a game of grab all the time and snatches its success in a hurry. The Potter God "is some being apparently like a sublimated Potterite, who rejoices in bad singing, bad art, bad praying and bad preaching, and sits aloft to deal out rewards to those who practice these and punishments to those who do not." "Potterism has no room for Christianity. It prefers the God of the Old Testament." However, "the Potterites have taken Christianity and watered it down to suit themselves." The Potterite is capable, adaptable, acquisitive and greedy. He does things for what there is in them for him, no matter how much they may seem to be done for others. The social worker who prates "service"

and draws a handsome salary, the minister whose eloquence and social qualifications "call" him to the charge of a congregation of wealth and social prominence where he need no longer slum, the man who writes books which shall be most abundantly salable or paints portraits which shall bring him most into vogue—all of these are Potterites. And the distinction is drawn between all these and him—supposing he can anywhere be found—who seeks truth singly for the love of truth or beauty in art or in living for art and for life. In a word, disinterestedness is the one certain thing which "Potterism" is not; the disinterestedness of heart as to one's fellow men, the disinterestedness of mind that knows not commercialized results. How very impractical?

Yes, "Potterism" is nothing if it is not practical. For "Potterism" loathes figures, unless they fall on the credit side. It talks much of principles—but prefers interest. It would rather face naked steel than a naked fact—it is so improper. "Potterism" dotes on the past which it recreates with a commonplace imagination and a loving sentimentalism into something smacking of lavender and respectability. "Potterism" is smug, persistent, stubborn and in all these traits and many others upsets any moral standard with which to apply the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. The basis of its philoso-

phy might be stated in the words. "I am the fittest, therefore I survive." But why attempt to emulate the wit of Miss Macaulay, whose story even better than her epigrams details the true symptoms of this universal human malady?

Miss Macaulay's hero is half a Jew and half a Russian, which is certainly flying in the face of contemporary "Potterism." He is not a theorist who, by force of intellect, overthrows the world, only a man clear-sighted and unprejudiced enough to see the folly of it and human enough not to transcend human frailty. He is not triumphant, like a true Potterite hero, but falls in the end a victim equally to "Potterism" and to its two opposites, whichever is which, white or red, in Russia. The twins, John and Jane, with their parallel university educations, their critical ideas and experiences in the Potterite world, of which they are part, seem not without a cast at a certain Joan and Peter, one of the rungs of a long ladder, by means of which a certain historian of the universe has attained to universality. The twins are commonplace, clever young people, clear sighted enough intellectually to know a Potterite on sight, except when looking in a looking glass. But their souls are Potterish, wherefore they do what they like, get what they want, or nearly, succeed in the success of the world, which all so love, and

remain to the end, like the rest of us, essentially devotees to "Potterism."

Your reviewer is not by nature a pessimist, nor does he seek to acquire pessimism. But pessimism, alas! in these late days, is thrust upon us—most persistently thrust upon us. And the thrust is often difficult to parry. With ideals flouted and the idealist a pariah in his own "land of idealism," and with an insensate world joyously slipping back into barbarism and skilfully mixing the cup for the next deadly draught of war, it is well that some of us can still retain that superiority of man over the beast, the gift of laughter, even if it be ironic. There is really nothing in the world so incredible as a man—unless it be a woman. Wherefore, analysis of self being unpleasant—and also unwholesome—read "Potterism."

JOSEPH CONRAD ON LIFE AND LETTERS

ACQUAINTANCE with books is much like acquaintance with men: the wider our circle, the greater the chances of friendship; however, knowledge may bring with it disenchantment as well as enchantment. After all, we may know many and yet love but few; though when we think of the variety in mankind and in bookkind, we should readily become catholic, if not in our tastes at least in our discernments. I can like almost any book—except a cash book, which is a thing to many of us deceptive, troublesome to keep, and misleading in title. For, as with men, in almost every book there is some good. In these "Notes on Life and Letters," by the famous novelist, Joseph Conrad, there seems to me only good, for theirs is the discontinuousness, the variety, the intimacy of good talk. In them is neither the formality of the essay, the irrelevancy of letters written for some specific purpose, nor the limitation to subject which fiction demands and receives from so conscientious a novelist as Mr. Conrad. This book lets us into the personality of a man who is nowhere obtrusive or given to attitudinizing; it is like a letter of introduction to him and he receives his reader as a friend.

To those of us who live contentedly in one locality all our lives, convinced that any one born elsewhere is rather to be pitied, if not mistrusted, a life such as that of Mr. Conrad's must seem not only strange but all but miraculous. To be born within the confines of that shadowy designation of the ghost of a sometime country, Poland—now once again a living, romantic reality—to have chosen deliberately the sea as a vocation—Poland having no more seacoast than Shakespearean Bohemia; and then to have achieved the rank of a leading writer in a tongue with which his young manhood found him wholly unacquainted; these are marvels to such of us as live at home in our back yards and acquire with our milk teeth each his own provincial nasality in the pronunciation of what Mr. Menken calls "the American language."

I once knew a clever foreigner who argued that transplanting from one soil into another, if the tree endures it at all, is likely to beget a more vigorous and luxuriant growth; and that, by the same token, the man who early enough in his life changes his nationality and even his language, if he takes root and brings anything with him from the country of his birth, will have two eyes with which to behold the world instead of one. In two or three languaged men we often find a liberality of view not characteristic of him only to the

manner born. Of this Mr. Conrad is an example in the cosmopolitan spirit which is his, a spirit, however, which has not deprived him either of a fervent love for his mother Poland, nor of devotion to his adopted mother England. The several papers on Poland in this volume are of a revealing worth and excellence, Mr. Conrad knows his subject and loves his native country with a romantic passion, which, however, does not obscure his comprehension. "The Crime of Partition," a round, unvarnished tale, is worth half the lengthy histories on this murder of a nation; the "Note on the Polish Problem" sets forth with striking brevity the plight of what was still at the time of its writing (1916) the wraith of a remembered wrong. And in "Poland Revisited" speaks in concentrated fervor the wanderer returning to what was once his.

It is in "Poland Revisited" that Mr. Conrad tells how in that fateful summer of 1914 he accepted an invitation to visit Cracow, traversing the North Sea and Germany just before the declaration of war, which caught him in Russia, from which he with difficulty at length escaped by way of Vienna to Italy and back to England. It must be gratifying to Americans to know that the protection of the American eagle was extended over him in the process, something he forgets not to mention with the name of Mr.

Pennfield, whose many services to those in like plight will be long remembered. But the hold of this paper upon the reader is for its reminiscences and its descriptive touches of that great North Sea on which Mr. Conrad began his seafaring. As he sits in the train in the Liverpool station. about to start, he recalls his first arrival as a boy of nineteen in London on that spot. He had come off of one ship and was seeking another to ship before the mast to Australia. He had nothing but the fragment of a map of London to guide him to an obscure "Dickenslike nook of London," he calls it, there to find the man who was to place him. And he tells us that it never occurred to him to seek his way in a conveyance. Strange contrast between this foreign lad, unknown to any one of the millions in the great sea of humanity, and the approved, successful author with his volumes of achievement, his hosts of friends, his family and the place in the world which he has made his. Truly, some trees wax luxuriant in the transplanting.

Two or three absorbing papers are those on various aspects of the loss of the Titanic, in which the expert in the affairs of the sea, as well as the humanitarian, speaks out. Little could Mr. Conrad have known that what man inflicts on man was to sink this terrible disaster into insignificance within a year or two. But it is in such

papers as "Well Done" or "Tradition," in which the man who followed the sea for twenty years tells of the quality, the simplicity, the courage of the British merchant service which he knew so well, it is in these that we taste the Conrad of "The Nigger of the Narcissus." The former of these in its effort to explain "this unholy fascination" of the sea, with its story of the one thief whom the writer had ever met in the service, a thief less through dishonesty than adventure; the finding of the heart of the seaman's loyalty in service, and the essence of manliness in work, these are fine things, finely said. And there are exhibits of rightness, if I may put it so, as to autocracy, the censorship of plays, the after life and what not. But the best thing about the book—and it is the best thing that can be said about a book—is to find in it the revelation of a man thinking manly without prejudice or sophistications, literary or social. If it is salt water that can thus clear our eyes and our perceptions, would that more of us were baptized in it.

THEOPHRASTUS IN KANSAS

I HAVE found only one superfluous adjective in this book—and that is that work-horse or clothes-horse, "admirable," sandwiched between "her" and "sex": a case, so to speak, of attraction of the obvious. Ordinarily the supernumerary adjectives of the average book, excised and gathered together, would reduce the whole volume about ten per cent. Any conspicuous lack of the superfluous, if we are so lucky as anywhere to happen upon it, we are apt to refer to Yankee reticence; and much might be said of the brevity of reticence and also of the barrenness of a soil which cannot be made to produce much anyhow. This "Anthology" shows that with other excellences cornered in the markets of the moralities by the Puritans, brevity may flourish even in the wide spaces of Kansas. In point of fact artists call this quality by a better term, economy of stroke; and economy of stroke is a notable quality in Mr. Howe's "Another Town."

A certain eastern professor was lecturing some years ago in literary Indianapolis and, asked about himself, confessed that although caught early in an eddy that had carried his family back East and reversed the usual flow westward, he was actually born in Indiana. Whereupon an enthusiastic native of that literary

state exclaimed: "When you get down to brass tacks, all these here lit'rary fellers hails from Indiany." Edgar Watson Howe was born in Indiana and got his schooling in Missouri, thus resembling Mark Twain in the most important part of a man's education. Mr. Howe is no stranger as a writer to such as keep abreast of the times, as his successful books, "Ventures in Common Sense" and "The Story of a Country Town," attest. This "Anthology of Another Town" is named in reference to the book just mentioned. It is something thus to have put two towns on the map, to say nothing of Atchison on the globe. Mr. Menken says that Howe is "America incarnate," and, like Dad, Mr. Menken knows.

The "Anthology of Another Town" is not a story, nor a collection of essays, much less the disjointed paragraphs of a columnist. Each item—which word better expresses it than chapter, or section (as they range from several pages down to four or five lines of prose in print) —each item, as I was saying, is complete in itself and might stand alone anywhere. But there is unity in tone, manner and purpose of all that completes a picture despite the independence of each part. In fact if I were looking for a term of classification I should revive the old word "character," for Mr. Howe's book; only the

"character," from its original in Theophrastus to Hall and Overbury in old England, was usually more in the nature of a set description, a bit of portraiture and commonly satirical in intent. Mr. Howe in these little sketches of the actualities and trivialities of a small western town has contrived to put off satire with its limitations and to rid himself of all the literary furbelows. The result makes for the economy of stroke of which I have just written; it produces an effect sometimes almost bald (the accompanying danger of simplicity carried to a logical conclusion); but more often it achieves its purpose where elaboration would fail. Humor, the touch of pathos on occasion, a faithfulness to verity always—all these things are incidental and arise out of the subject: never are they thrust into it.

For example, one of the longer "characters" tells of a "city journalist" taken on in the office of a country newspaper. He is pitifully incompetent and has a habit of wandering away from his sixty-year-old wife, a "physician," widow of two predecessors, but genuinely fond of her feckless husband, who is about half her age. At last the poor fellow dies, and out of respect for the widow's grief the town gives the deceased a good funeral, in which coffin, flowers, bearers, white gloves and all are donated. One of the pallbearers failing—he was a lawyer who always

promised to speak on public occasions and always failed to appear—Sam Kelsey, the new mayor, was pressed into that service, and taking command, the whole thing was carried to the last detail. "The casket was very heavy, and it was hard work getting it into the car, but finally this was accomplished, and the flowers placed on the casket. Then we stood around in solemn silence for a moment, before departing, and Sam Kelsey, with his hat still off, wiped a lot of perspiration from the top of his bald head, and leaning over to me, whispered in a tender, sympathetic way: 'Who was he?' " For another example, take this, which I quote entire: "Ben Bradford, known to be a little gay, says the first time he kissed a woman other than his wife, he felt as sneaking as he did when he first began buying of Montgomery, Ward & Co. But Ben gradually became hardened, and many say he now trades with Sears-Roebuck, too." If any confirmed dweller in cities does not understand this, let him move to the country, and he will.

In a very entertaining recent book, Mr. Edson's "Gentle Art of Columning," it is maintained, if I remember rightly, that all humor, as well as all wit, is referable to a kind of malice in us that delights in seeing the laugh on the other fellow. I have never liked this idea of humor, and with Mr. Edson's pardon will say that I do

not believe it as to all humor. And I would cite both Mr. Howe's "Towns" as illustrations in point. There is no want of discernment in either of them, and many of their inhabitants are as hard, as wrong-headed and as absurd, well, as we are ourselves. The college-bred lawyer who came down in the world until his wife kept cows, of whom his rival said: "If he ever makes me mad, I'll just quit taking milk of him and starve him to death"; the daughter who would have the blinds down of nights although her sick old father wanted to look out at the stars; the slanderous wife who invented tales of her deserted husband's wealth and niggardliness and ruined him—in none of these faithful little sketches of Mr. Howe is there malice or uncharitableness. We need Mr. Howe's "Towns" as a corrective of the horrid "mortuaries" of Spoon River. It is one thing to detest the entire human race like Swift; it is another to laugh at men and women, and, what is still better, to laugh with them. Wit and humor, with their outriders—to the left, satire, lampoon and invective; to the right, pathos and tenderness—have always seemed to me more things in the nature of the spectrum, governed to the left with the light rays of the head, and to the right with the heat rays of the heart. Where they dissolve the one into the other, it might be difficult often to say, but we

know when we are warmed, and we are aware when only the flash light has been turned on.

Mr. Masters once confessed, I believe, that it was the Greek anthology which inspired "Spoon River" from the very irony of mortuary inscription. I wonder if Mr. Howe knows old Theophrastus, with his "simple method, plain black and white," with his language, "the simplest possible, neither bookish nor doctrinal nor controversial * * * He who relies for his effect on the simplicity of truth * * * and when you laugh, it is at humor in its last element of simple incongruity." This is recent learned criticism of Theophrastus, not the present reviewer's effort as to Mr. Howe. But 'twill serve. "How much one gets from a little talk, to be sure," says the "Loquacious Man"—Mr. Howe would have called him Jim Walker—"and his children say to him at bedtime: 'Papa, chatter to us, that we may fall asleep." This is Theophrastus, not Mr. Howe. "We haven't a daily paper in our town." says Mr. Howe, not Theophrastus, "but really we don't greatly miss one, owing to Mr. Stevens, the milkman." And just one more: "Sandy McPherson, the barber, says he charges five dollars for shaving a dead man because he is compelled to throw away the razor he used. But how do we know he throws the razor away?"

CARL SANDBURG—REBEL

I HAVE tried to read Carl Sandburg's new book "Smoke and Steel," without predispositions and prejudices. I have tried to forget the laws and rules of the arts. I have put aside prosody as inapplicable, rhetoric as superfluous, grammar and the deft usages of cultivated speech as impertinent, and I hope that I have achieved an honest detachment. Some of us are born rebels. We are not content to walk in the steps of other men; we want our own ways, and it is our right. Some of us find in accepted art, as in accepted science, chains of the past; in the accepted usages of men, chains of the present. And we throw overboard likewise the accepted explanations of much in life, for example, and in religion, lest we forge chains once more for the future. The intellectual rebel, the rebel in art, is a fascinating figure wherever we meet him. Marlowe blaspheming, not high heaven, as we used to be taught, but the orthodoxy of his age, which is not the orthodoxy of ours; Byron scandalously shocking Mrs. Grundy; Walt Whitman, glorious breaker of images, plaster, bisque, bronze and marble—these are some of the refreshing rebels of literature.

The rebel may be a Prometheus and bring down the fire of heaven for the good of men and not merely upon his own devoted head; or the

rebel may be only a naughty boy who won't wash his face and go to school. Do not jump at conclusions, dear reader; I have not classified Mr. Sandburg yet, and I may not succeed when I try, I once knew a small would-be poetical rebel who showed his insubordination in the color of his socks and the gorgeousness of his neckties. He has posed now—and imposed—for a good many years, but I still call him a small rebel because, whatever may be the fact, he leaves with me an impression of insincerity, in which, if I wrong him, I am heartily sorry. One feels of him, as the congregation of Laurence Sterne is said to have felt, in doubt as to what he is likely to do next to surprise, if not to scandalize, in doubt except that it will be unclerical; his wig whipped off and thrown in your face or a *pas de seul* in the pulpit.

Of one thing I am very certain as to Mr. Sandburg. He is very much in earnest, and I like him for that. Moreover, there is nothing weak or mawkish about him. He is also not out with a shotgun after his readers. His pieces—I am not ready to call them poems yet—have, too, much the air of being overheard rather than heard, and this is a great thing to be able to say, even of a poet. Now, when a man is without pose, in earnest and manly, you respect him, even although you may not admire his manners.

And in using this word I am sadly aware that I am introducing something trivial in the face of what Carlyle used to delight in calling the eternal Verities—the capitalized Verities. Mr. Sandburg is too virile to be insincere; he is so virile, indeed, that at times he is brutal. He seems one of those who, seeking for strength, find it best typified in a blow between the eyes; who, looking for truth, discover it in nakedness aware that it is nakedness; who, searching for an escape from affectation, find sincerity and integrity only in the conduct and the language of the slums and worse. For example, speaking of the exquisite musical composer, Grieg, Mr. Sandburg tells us: "Grieg being dead, we may speak of him and his art. Grieg being dead, we can talk about whether he was any good or not. Grieg being with Ibsen, Bjornson, Lief Ericson and the rest, Grieg being dead does not care a hell's hoot what we say. Morning, Spring, Anitra's Dance. He dreams them at the doors of new stars." This is the "poem" complete except for measured printing. The concluding thought, though no original one, is a fine human sentiment. But why smash it with the incongruous brutality of a "hell's hoot"? Norway, we are told at the moment, is much disturbed over a bit of American desecration of this very music of "Peer

Gynt" into ragtime. Is Mr. Sandburg's "hell's hoot" any better?

In every work of art, picture, piece of music or bit of writing there is obviously the idea and the execution of it. Some people think that it is in the perfect union of these two things that successful art consists. Mr. Sandburg is strong in the originality of the ironic and the grotesque. Take "The Alley Rats," whose jargon classifies whiskers as "lilacs, galways, feather dusters," and who are appropriately "croaked" one day at "a necktie party." Or the irony of the idea "they (that is, we) all want to play Hamlet"; the whimsicality of the query. "How does a hangman behave at home?" or the daring thought of God as a crapshooter: "God is Luck and luck is God; we are all bones the High Thrower rolled; some are two spots, some double sixes." This is as grotesque and compelling as the dance of death itself. At times the irony, if lighter, is none the less admirable, as in "The Sins of Kalamazoo," which "are neither scarlet nor crimson," but "a convict gray, a dishwater drab"; or the manufactured wooden gods which answer prayers and make rain quite "as well as any little tin god." If we ask ourselves honestly could these keen, bitter, odd, contorted ideas be better conveyed more musically, metrically or in a less bald and direct manner, the answer is

"no." Mr. Sandburg's manner suits his matter, even in its colloquialism, its slang, its short unmusical phrase and scorn of the graces.

However, Mr. Sandburg is not without imagery, most of it remarkably original, some of it remarkably fine—the river described as "the upper twist of a written question mark," "the white cauliflower faces of miners' wives" awaiting their husbands, purple martens "slinging ciphers" and "sliding figure eights" in their "sheaths of satin blue." But more commonly they are misshapen into something grotesque. A certain woman is "turned to a memorial of salt looking at the lights of a forgotten city"; two lovers are described as "chisel-pals"; the "East shakes a baby toe at tomorrow," and on the verge assuredly of incoherence: "There was a late autumn cricket and two smouldering mountain sunsets under the valley roads of her eyes."

By far the best poem—there I have called it a poem—of the volume is "Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind," a cumbrous title equivalent to All is Vanity. Here we have vivid imagery: "The woman named Tomorrow," with "a hairpin in her teeth, doing her hair"; the cedar gold-bound doors of "the greatest city that ever was" and "the golden girls" who sing its greatness. Then the wind and the rain and the crows, the rats and the lizards. It is notable that much of

the effect of this variation on a theme at least as old as Solomon is here produced by what Miss Amy Lowell is fond of dwelling on—as if there were anything that is new in the "new poetry"—to wit, as "the return," here almost a refrain. Some of the phrases almost fall into the regular cadence of that unhallowed thing, verse. Strange it is and most happy that genuine emotion often restores to the rebel and the theorist utterance which he has refused, as the presence of death may bring back the atheist to God. Mr. Sandburg is to be reckoned with. That he has justified the repudiation of the nine muses and the denial of all the graces is yet to be shown.

ALFRED NOYES AND A GREAT POETIC TRADITION

THIS is a third volume of the collected poetry of Mr. Noyes, assembling the work otherwise published since 1913, together with "some new poems hitherto unpublished." Introduction and acclaim are things long since passed, by Mr. Noyes. Secure in his acknowledged rank among those who are carrying on the great tradition of English poetry, it is only for the subaltern critic to salute him as he passes, one of the august group which leads. No more than just attained to middle life, Mr. Noyes has an enviable amount of achievement behind him from his first volume, "The Loom of Years," published when he was but twenty-two years of age, to "The Elfin Artist" and this latest volume. Lyric, epic (as witnessed in the noble "Drake"), narrative, the poetry of nature and of dainty, fairy lore, sentiment, humor, feeling, all come naturally, facilely and effectively from his fertile pen. Not only does Mr. Noyes meet adequately and gracefully every claim of the moment upon him for that expression of occasional sentiment on men and events which has always been recognized as one of the anticipated functions of the accepted popular British poet, but he does these difficult things, as if there were nothing in the world easier

to do, and he does them, successfully voicing ideas, feelings and sentiments in which all can concur. Not the least pleasing and interesting is it that the Sussex poet who surprised Clayton Hamilton, now a good many years ago, by the confession that he had not been abroad, not even to France, which lay almost in view, should since have come to us, and, in the relations which he has established at Princeton and the many ties and friendships which are now his with America, should have drawn closer those bonds of amity and brotherhood which bind the two great Anglo-Saxon peoples in one.

Language is a stronger tie than treaties; and a common literature more enduring than cement. Wells, Galsworthy, Bennett, Barrie, Masefield, Noyes—these are contemporary names, with many more as well known among us as in London. A decade almost before the war the late Hamilton Mabie introduced us to an American reprint of poems by Mr. Noyes, since when the poet has become an international figure, expressing again and again in form of beauty those larger and more universal truths which mark the acquiescence and unity of two great nations. To the carping ignorant who affirm from time to time with a Philistine leer that poetry is dead, there is no better answer than the sale in many

editions of the poetry of men such as Mr. Masefield and Mr. Noyes. I recall how a few years ago, when the former was advertised to read his poetry in the halls of an Eastern University, the concourse of those who came to hear him was so great that adjournment was made to a neighboring church, which itself could scarcely hold the crowd. Mr. Noyes has upon more than one occasion experienced a similar welcome and held his audience with the sheer force of powerful verse and the charm of a personality which explains at once his grace, his forthrightness and the significance of his popular appeal.

I have written above of Mr. Noyes as one of those favored poets, who is acclaimed by his contemporaries as worthy to carry on the great tradition of English poetry. In that mighty line walked Chaucer and Spenser, each in his day, the spokesman of his time in its acceptance, its aspirations and its hopes, glorified as a herald is decked out in brave uniform, but none the less a true voice of his time. In that august line came Dryden and even Milton, rebel in part though he was, and later Pope, and, in his time, Wordsworth and Tennyson, and, in our America, Longfellow, to mention no more. Of course, there have been many lesser men who, each in his way, has helped to carry on the poetry of the

centre, if I may so call it, the poetry which is essentially the expression of the spirit of its own age without being in any wise impaired in the sincerity with which it expresses likewise the man who writes it. If I may venture on a trite old figure, this great stream of literature, which has come down to us from the runnels and tricklings of early ages, bears much stately and accepted commerce on its steady current, much that floats securely amid stream. Poets who are in the great tradition of English letters escape the rapids of the rebels, the shallows of ineptitude, the backwaters of imitation, and the bogs and morasses of eccentricity, where nothing floats. To leave figures, such are in the line of an orderly evolution, they are not freaks; they do not startle, surprise or scandalize; as Taine said of Tennyson, "They will pervert nobody." They are safe and orthodox, each with an orthodoxy of his time which, we should be careful to remember, is not the orthodoxy necessarily of all time. I cannot feel that it is the function of art at all times to stun and amaze. The certainty and restfulness of Jane Austen is worth all the novels of terror of her age baled into one huge packet. And it comes almost as a balm and an alleviation in these days of topsy-turvydom to read a poet who believes unaffectedly in God and

finds it unnecessary to punctuate that belief with a big base drum.

With all Mr. Noyes' felicity and variety of theme, his adequacy, the saneness and justice of his attitude toward life and the elevated quality of his sentiments, scarcely anything is more striking than the technical excellence of his art. In this day of jazz music, future perfectist art and spineless verse, it is a boon to have this skilful and consummate vindicator in practice of the time-honored graces and beauties of poetry which Mr. Noyes insists on treating as an art in words. Like every true artist, he has extended tradition while observing it, and he fully deserves all the praise that he has received for his originality and inventiveness in new stanzas, his novel experiments (such as rhymes on the first word, single word refrains and the like), and a frequently novel and clever use of repetition and refrain. Above all this consummate metrist has preserved the melody of our beautiful English tongue, giving it again and again new effects and charmingly novel cadences. If it is pleasant to turn from the cacophony of much of our free verse and other to the music of Mr. Noyes, it is no less a delight to come out of the gloom, the black significance and enigmatic depths of some of our contemporary poets into

the sunshine which illumes the sparkling world of Mr. Noyes' wholesome fancy. Come, let us put our questionings away and believe that there are fairies in the forests and the glades of old England at the least, that there are things of beauty in this world of ours and that God is not remote in his heavens, sitting austere, but is manifest in joy and goodness in the hearts of men.

MR. MASEFIELD AND THE KEY POETIC.

IT is said that everybody—that is everybody who cares about things of the mind—carries about with him somewhere, like a bunch of keys, certain definitions which he uses, as occasion may offer, to unlock the avenues of thought or discourse. Sometimes these keys are remarkably hard and definite, good each for one little door and for nothing else; sometimes they are fewer in number, adjustable in various locks, assuming at last, in the truly cultivated and liberalized, the qualities of a master key which can open all locks. To vary the figure, he who does not hold many of his definitions—even of very familiar things—in solution, under advisement, ready to be adapted to growth in the world and in himself, will soon be without a key to unlock anything. There was a time within the memory of those still alive when there were grave doubts in the minds of many as to whether Browning was writing poetry or something for which a new name must be found, or whether the Wagnerian "cacophony," as some called it, was really music and not something else. And yet how far have we passed beyond all this in de-versified poetry, demelodized music and denicotined cigars, to carry our denials no further.

But it is not along this line that the poetry of Mr. Masefield gives us pause; for no Keats was ever more enthralled to beauty than is Mr. Masefield, and the music of verse, with all the old devices, often astonishingly and daringly developed, is to him as the apple of his eye. But there is something more. It is possible to love beauty selectively and, trusting the eye, choose only that which is pleasing in theme and agreeable to dwell on. Mr. Masefield is a far more significant artist than this in his facing of the realities, in his acceptance of a subject in its difficulties to discover the deeper, the more significant beauty which it is the function of the true artist to reveal. The man who has written of the brutal realities of the forecastle and the prize fight—as Mr. Masefield has written in "Dauber" and in "The Everlasting Mercy"; of sensuality and murder itself, as in "The Widow of the Bye Street"—is no effeminate devotee of mere beauty. But be it noticed that Mr. Masefield's method in all his realism is that of an artist keenly alive not only to the obvious outward truth of line and contour, but to that inner truth of the spirit which is worth all the small arts of taste and prettiness rolled into one.

I recall a pleasantly disputatious friend who carried about with him a portentous bunch of the keys of definition and jingled them inces-

santly. He was always getting down to brass tacks and he usually stayed there. One day the argument recurred to "Well now what, after all, is poetry?" and a famous old poem on Winter became the subject of illustration. In that poem, which contains that "coughing," it will be remembered, which "drowned the parson's saw," the refrain runs: "While greasy Joan doth keel the pot," an idea, homely, familiar and, as the older critics would have said, "low," My friend was willing to accept the word "keel" as archaic and, being out of use, therefore strange enough to be poetic. He objected to "greasy" as descriptive enough, but unpoetical, and agreed with the old critics that "pot" was simply "low.' Another line of the famous old poem really incensed him. It runs: "And Marian's nose looks red and raw." Was Marian remarkable in this? No. Was it not vividly descriptive? Yes. But then the subject was so unpoetical. Winter, unpoetical! Obviously the poetic key of my friend of the brass tacks would not unlock much.

We have yet to learn with any degree of conviction that beauty is not art unless that beauty be significant; that mere significance is not art unless that significance be raised by a recognition of its inherent beauty and harmony into the region of art. A multiplication table is significant, very significant; and so, alas! is an account book.

Now, Mr. Masefield is one of those rare poets who establishes in the best of his work an equilibrium, so to speak, between the significance of reality and that ideality which is the essence of beauty. There are passages in "Dauber," for example, the wretched anemic lad before the mast, enamored of color, in the supreme moment, a hero—there are passages as imaginative as "The Lay of the Ancient Mariner" and as realistic as Jack London; and the impression is that of poetry, not because, as in the former, we trespass into the supernatural, but because of realization of the realities in terms of the beautiful.

"Right Royal" is the story of a steeplechase. This is nothing very new. The Greek poet Pindar established an immortal reputation on the commemoration of athletic events. But "Right Royal" is a narrative of a singularly compelling nature. I did not want to leave it until the winning post was passed. The go, the whirl the picturesqueness of it all is delightful and the effect, with all its detail of the small actualities, could not have been achieved save by the lifting power of poetry. I cannot think of it in free verse, for example. For where would be the rhythm that beats with the clatter of hoofs in which, be it remarked, there is a certain regularity in life if ever a race is won? The picture

of the concourse and crowd, of the stables, the stablemen, the costermongers, the "bookies," even the negro minstrels and sellers of oranges, is vividly successful and daring. And here let me break a lance in a small matter with some of the critics who object to Mr. Masefield's audacious rhymes, some of them mere assonance, like "disposes—knows his," or "offense—Testaments." What matters it if a veritably artistic effect is produced and not destroyed by these risqué feats of daring? There is nothing unpermissible in art, which, like rebellion, is to be judged alone by its success. Of course, if you do not succeed you richly deserve hanging and usually get it. No one who has heard Mr. Masefield tell one of his delightful tales of extravagant humor and ingenuity could raise the question as to whether these feats on the border of the grotesque are conscious or not.

"Enslaved and Other Poems," contains many fine things. I like "The Lemmings," who come "westward over the snow" seeking food and "some calm place

> Where one could taste God's quiet and be fond
> With the little beauty of a human face.
> But now the land is drowned, yet still we press
> Westward, in search, to death, to nothingness.

But the masterpiece of these two volumes is the tremendous ballad of the supernatural, "The

Hounds of Hell," tuneful, grotesque, powerful, with the vigor of reality with all its diablerie of the supernatural. It is not to be spoiled by blabbing as to what it is about; for, like all art that is really worth while, it can be conveyed in no wise except its own and defies description, epitome or any other short cut to an inferior understanding.

AN OLD MYTH REVITALIZED.

"AND what are you painting now?" said Mr. Bounder to his friend, the artist.

"A portrait of Cleopatra was the reply."

"A portrait of Cleopatra? Why I thought that that old girl had had her picture taken long ago."

"Oh yes, she was taken and retaken often enough in life; and you may take this remark in any way you like, but——"

Here the artist broke down. What is the use of trying to explain to a Bounder the immortality of a great subject? How can you get him to see the difference between "getting through" with fractions, both vulgar and proper, once and for all, and the circumstance that one never "gets through" with Beethoven or the great poets whose works, being art and not knowledge, are permanent, things to live in, not like the sciences, be they great or little, things to pass through. Wherefore to Mr. Bounder the title of Mr. Robinson's book will be a sufficient deterrent; for what have Bounders to do with Lancelots or Camelots? Their business is with corner lots and job lots.

Among the inheritances of this undeserving race of ours it may well be questioned if there is any one so precious as myths, those stories of old

time which come down the ages, gathering on the way, new artistic beauty in variable form and a novel and deeper significance. The power to construct myths is the measure of a people's mentality; for the myth, in religion, tradition and song, is the veritable expression of the race, the voice of the folk. Inferior peoples are mythically voiceless, or, when they speak, give us crudity. Great peoples have always been vocal in their myths, about which the least important thing is the actual facts out of which they have grown. Take the splendid myth of the magnificence of Solomon, king of kings. The actualities tell us that he was the chief of a small principality forming the corridor connecting two great empires, to one at least of which he paid tribute; and as to the marvellous temple of Solomon, it appears to have covered a city lot of some 100 feet by 50 at the most. We shall not inquire into the wisdom of him who took unto himself so many wives. But the myth of Solomon, the wise and magnificent, is a tribute to the patriotism, the imaginative power and poetic ideals of the Hebrew race. The glory of the wisdom of Solomon, like the splendor of his temple, has blazed down through the ages; it typifies for us the ancient Hebrew people, not in their paltry actualities, but in their ideals and aspirations. So the heroic age of Greece is the "Iliad," not the

"history" of the petty squabbles of a few small chieftains over a stolen woman; and the barbarity, superstition and sordidness of the middle ages as poverty-stricken historians are constrained by "facts" to reconstruct them, rise up into beauty and pathos and immortality in the "Mort D'Arthur" and the "Chanson de Roland."

Another thing about the myth is that it is never outworn; but told and retold is adaptable to all time. Take just this old story of Lancelot, told once more so beautifully, so directly, so novelly, by this American poet. Like all true myths, it is of imperishable material, and as such may be sung from Geoffrey of Monmouth and Wace to Tennyson, William Morris and Swinburne, and now again by Mr. Robinson, and yet ever be new. The power of this great romance of chivalry to inspire the poets is amazing the more so as it inspires them in so many different ways. The intricate patterning of Spenser with its underlying allegory; the refined, somewhat colorless but beautiful, sentimentalizing of Tennyson; the pre-Raphaelite color and sensuousness, not always intellectually sustained; the robust heroic-barbaric, Christian-heathen mysticism of Wagnerian saga—all these things are the inspiration of the mythology of chivalry which centres in King Arthur. The poets have always been

attracted to the subject. "For a heroic poem," said old Ben Jonson, "there is no such ground as King Arthur's fiction." And Milton only gave up this topic for "Paradise Lost" after a long entertainment of it.

Mr. Robinson's "Lancelot" is a comparatively brief narrative, or perhaps better, a semi-dramatic poem; for most of the story is unfolded in dialogue of a peculiarly direct and limpid diction, howsoever the thought is at times deep, if not subtle. A swift and remarkably monosyllabic blank verse, of great freedom in phrasing but absolutely metrical, is the fitting medium for this rapid and living discourse. The story deals with the belated discovery, almost forced upon him, by King Arthur of the relations of Lancelot and Guinevere, the queen; her rescue from burning at the stake for her unchastity by Lancelot, in accomplishing which he is driven, though unknowing, to kill two brothers of his friend, Gawaine. The story concludes with the last meeting of the lovers in the monastery at Glastonbury with Lancelot's renunciation and departure into the night in search of the Light. But these events are not Mr. Robinson's theme, which is not reduceable thus to its elemental "facts." The interplay of human emotion in beings, swept hither and thither by passions and happenings, alternately controlled and uncontrolled, in a

world predestined, but to what extent we know not—this is Mr. Robinson's theme, and with it is developed the innate nobility of man, however weak and the sport of time. Lancelot is a finely conceived creation, strong, individual, magnanimous, yet human.

I have no objection to allegorical poetry, if you do not attempt to interpret the allegory. Indeed, allegory is best left to the kind of people who like that sort of thing. To me even logarithms are preferable. For which reason it is a disappointment, to me at least, to learn that, more or less goaded to it, Tennyson once owned the soft impeachment that "The Idyls of the King" were an extended allegory of human life. But significance is one thing, allegory quite another. The real objection to allegory is that it is significance frozen into a rigidity of application that defeats artistic purpose. Mr. Robinson's poem is profoundly significant of the great tragedy of our time; his Lancelot rises almost to the typification of our human race, weak, sinful, passionate, but noble at heart and large in spirit. In this noble poem, poetry is performing its true function in fashioning one of the great myths of all time into a significance in the present, and in conveying that significance in the terms of artistic beauty, the poet adds another link in the flashing and perdurable chain of an imperishable story.

THE POETRY OF GEORGE E. WOODBERRY.

THIS small volume contains, besides the longer poem which gives it title and takes up considerably more than half of its pages, a sequence of some forty sonnets, "Ideal Passion," already published, some "poems of the great war," largely likewise in sonnet form, and a few additional sonnets and lyrics on other themes. It marks the continuance of the career of Mr. Woodberry as a poet of high attainment and assured reputation, for in this book is sustained his power of picture, his beautiful elevation of thought and his delicate and exquisite diction.

The poems of the great war, to take them first, are full of patriotism, of high resolve and of touching compassion and pity for the fallen. They are the work of an American whose heart beats true and whose eyes are on the great essentials. And they are remarkably free from the *saeva indignatio* which stirs lesser natures in the contemplation of this seismic fault and slip-back of mankind into the barbarism out of which we were emerging. And yet these poems on the war are disappointing, I know not just why. Read, as I read them the other night, beside the fierce, bitter actualities of Wilford Owens, strummed out though these are with bare

knuckles on a naked board, Mr. Woodberry's flutelike notes of idealist sentiment seem thin and, dare I say it, almost irrelevant. Mr. Woodberry has a pure and holy passion for Italy which has echoed down the ages from Byron, the Brownings, Swinburne and the rest. I will not say that these poems seem literary—they are too sincere, too veritable, for that—however, they reverberate with an old song. I will rather salute all enthusiasm for Italy, despite Fiume and the madness of the poet who has recently been attitudinizing there, for I, too, love Italy in spite of all her chauvinism, sordidness and irrationality.

To say that Mr. Woodberry is a master sonneteer is to utter the mere truth. The sequence, "Ideal Passion," is, in this respect, almost a piece of virtuosity, for the poet is not only punctilious in the niceties of the sonnet form, he is strikingly original at times in its management and successful in maintaining throughout a technique fitting to sustain his elevated thought. I particularly admire his choice of the difficult alternative scheme on two rhymes for the sestet and his management of it is often exceedingly skilful. There is a large phrasing, too, in these sonnets which rids one completely of the feeling —only too common as to poetry in this form— that it is a species of mosaic or dove-tail work in

which patience and ingenuity are the chief essentials. Mr. Woodberry's subject is here, as often elsewhere, that high sustaining love which rises above all sense of self and sex to become the guiding ideal, unmatchable and unattainable, yet ever-begetting effort, devotion and effacement of self. Esoteric? Yes, my dear Philistine, a cult, a worship in a temple reared not by hands such as yours.

We are told that "The Roamer" is "a narrative of the soul's progress which may be considered as in small compass summarizing the religious, social and esthetic ideals of our own age." I am sure that I should not have ventured to have designated this remarkable platonic flight into the higher regions of poetry and philosophy by a designation smacking even so little of the mundane. Mr. Woodberry has achieved almost a complete spiritual detachment in this poem. There is only one thing about it which I do not like, and that is the title. It sounds, to speak profanely, so much like a kind of automobile or bicycle; and one thinks of "The Excursion," especially when we notice the vehicle—so to speak—which is blank verse, by which we are to be conveyed. But Wordsworth is not the man; be it said with all respect; Mr. Woodberry has lit his torch at the altar of Shelley, the very flame, of "Alastor" burns in it, and that beautiful and

steady flame is, as Shelley's, a beacon in the night, radiant with light, howsoever the lowly in poetry may not warm their hands by it.

I should want three or four times this space to do even partial justice to the exceeding beauty and the inspiring ideals of this lovely poem. It is said to have been written during a period of years but barring the deeper insight of the later books it is, for a poem of this kind, of a remarkable unity and of an equally remarkably sustained excellence. As with Shelley, we dwell here in the wild waste spaces, among scenes of unsurpassable beauty, usually seen in the large, with sweep of mountain, plain and sky, and our thoughts, under guidance of the poet, are of the beatitudes, the sublimities of vision into those creations of insight and the poetic imagination which men call unrealities, but which are, when all is said, the only real things in "this slipper world." But the prose of comment has not the power of levitation which the reader may find for himself in this noble descant on the aspiring soul of man. Better within reach is a recognition of the musical cadence of Mr. Woodberry's swift, varied and competent verse. I found music and fluidity in the unusually monosyllabic blank verse of Mr. Edwin Arlington Robinson's "Lancelot." Mr. Woodberry very contrastedly is rich in polysyllabic pomp and rapidity—

Millions of men innumerably spread,
Faces along the illimitable wave.

And his phrases sweep in long cadences that recall the Miltonic roll, albeit not the fuller Miltonic resonance. I will not say above all, but high among his many poetical gifts, is Mr. Woodberry's power of scenic description. Only a lover of the hills and the solitudes can so write; but over the allurements of the poet's art—and here we may well say, above all—is his lofty, his austere ideality, which finds the loss of self—as complete as that of the Buddha or the Christ—alone the fulfilment of a perfect love.

AS TO AMERICAN DRAMA

"AMERICAN drama!" and we hold up our hands in protest and begin to talk of commercialism and theatrical trusts. Or we start down the deadly lane of parallels and glow in comparative praises of the drama in France, in Germany, in Russia, anywhere. Or we inaugurate movements, following the English afar off in pageantry or civic plays. Or, if we do none of these things, at least we start a society providing qualified tasters who visit the theatres from time to time and, over a late supper, decide by vote what we should like and what we should advertise by our disapproval. Professor George P. Baker, of Harvard, did something quite different from all this, it is now a goodly number of years ago. He started his "47 Workshop" in a quiet and industrious endeavor to foster our drama, so far as such a thing as drama can be fostered, by precept and collegiate guidance, and he has long since justified his experiment in the turning out of several playwrights whose work is alike a credit to dramatic craftsmanship and a practical and accepted success upon the stage. Under these circumstances Professor Baker is peculiarly the man to collect, for the general reader, a group of American plays which shall stand as representative of our drama in its present state

of development. This he has done in a volume with the title of "Modern American Plays," prefixing to the text an all too brief introduction on the plays selected and the reasons for their selection.

Success on the stage is Professor Baker's first criterion of selection, and his second is variety. The opening play of the volume is "As a Man Thinks," by Augustus Thomas, a comedy of contemporary life, which touches on prevalent feminism, lightly but surely, with not quite the glib solution which is on the lip of the current feminist. In its essence this play is didactic, "a tendenz-drama," however deftly concealed in the skilful workmanship of one long tried and approved. The adaptable Mr. Belasco's "Return of Peter Grim" likewise touches on a topic of the hour, interest in that beyond and hereafter from the bourne of which we are not quite certain whether the traveller can really return. But Mr. Belasco cleverly leaves the matter less proved than suggested. Mr. Anspacher's "The Unchastened Woman" is notable in that it contrives to interest us in an uninteresting and unsympathetic heroine and to leave us at the end with things continuing and unadjusted very much as they carry on in life. Mr. Sheldon's "Romance," by far, one should think, the ablest play of the volume, contains the element of its

existence in its title and realizes at least one character of a holding personality. And Mr. Massey's "Plots and Playwrights" is satire of plays in a play, a time-honored species, old when Dryden was ridiculed in "The Rehearsal" and older still by the time that Sheridan plagiarized that satire in his "Critic."

Playmaking in the English language has been variously presided over in different times. To avoid rising out of our topic into the region of the divinities, Dryden, greatest of English satirists, ablest of general poets of his time, theorist and translator, was once the foremost playwright. At a subsequent time that post was occupied by Nicholas Rowe, poet laureate, who "followed Shakespeare," but a long way off; at still another by equally forgotten Sheridan Knowles, whose most veritable dramatic asset was his borrowed surname. Later times bring us triumvirates and oligarchs in the annals of the drama and we become bewildered among the Barries and the Shaws, the Pineros and the Joneses of times which are now, or were not very long ago. In America we may be a little less distraught, howsoever there are precious few of us who have not written, are writing or planning to write at the very least a farce or a pageant. But it would seem that it is not long since that our master playwright was the late

Clyde Fitch, and who shall deny that we are still under the benign and versatile sway of Mr. Belasco? Now, of such an art we must at least, confess that it has had its ups and downs, and that the amplitude of its vibrations, to put it in another way, has made various noises in the world whereof some have been high and others not so high. Nor can we expect it to be otherwise. The drama is, by the most honored of all figures, the mirror of human nature, however we leave that mirror at times to tarnish in neglect, however we may cover up a part of it or refuse to accept as veritable the images which it reflects. All the movies in Christendom, and in Heathendom besides, cannot kill the essential drama in us. The musical comedies have made a good try at it, as did the old heroic play in its time and melodrama and opera since. But the essential drama will abide when all these "sports" and offshoots are remembered only by the historians.

In reading Professor Baker's representatives of the accepted American drama of today, two or three things occur to the—let us hope—none-too-biased reader. Let us be frank about it; all of these plays read more or less baldly, at least as compared with much other former drama, also accepted for the stage, both English and foreign. Professor Baker is right when he says that "drama is a collaborative art," one in which the

author, the actor (and all who help his impersonation) and besides, the spectator as well, cooperate to a cumulative result. But I rather suspect that these modern plays of ours depend somewhat more on this cooperation, somewhat more on the actor and on the setting than did many of the plays which have gone before. They are at the mercy of their presentation because they are wanting in distinction of manner and of style; because their dialogue is so close a replica of our daily speech; because their personages are so obviously like everybody or anybody whom you or I are likely to meet. And now we arouse our "realist" friends, those who object to blank verse because they do not employ it habitually in discussions with Margery, those who resent soliloquy and the aside—like Mr. Shaw—because they do not happen in what they call "real life" and the like. But, my dear "realist," the stage is not the world and, even if Shakespeare did say it, not all of the world's a stage.

Neither distinction of manner nor distinction in the subtle thing which we call style is wanting in actual life, even in actual American life. But to catch it—or anything else for that matter—for the stage, you must translate it out of the language of life—that is the manner in which it is presented to our senses in life—into the language of the stage. And you cannot make the lan-

guage of the drama more realistic by forgetting its essential basis in art. These plays, excellent as they are and fully deserving of their success, seem to one who knows somewhat of a wider dramatic literature, flat in perspective, wanting in color, unindividualized in a measure as to their personages and unidiomatic, theatrically speaking, notwithstanding their undoubted mastery of that technique of the stage of which Professor Baker has happily made so much in his "workshop."

It is not altogether vision that we lack or poetry even. But we seem in these latter days to be a little afraid of seeing things—or at least of putting down what we see; while poetry stampedes us with terror into an effort to get as far away from it as possible. Are we getting to be as afraid of our emotions in art as of a display of our feelings in religion? Shall we arrive shortly at a point in which the gentleman will not only discuss neither politics or religion, but will recognize that any show of emotion for art or anything else is taboo? Wit, humor, sentiment, romance are as common in every-day life as they were when the old dramatist used them. There is scarcely a sparkle in the dialogue of any of these five representative plays and Professor Baker surprises us when he tells us of the success of the only bit of pathos in them all—and that

ironical—which occurs in the extravaganza, "Plays and Playwrights." With all our chatter about the freedom of the arts, our stage seems conventionalized all but to the point of stagnation. What a cad is the stock husband whose "past" is accepted as an essential part of any husband and played off against the wife's present or attempted future? And how delicately the neat distinctions of a double code of morals are drawn! And the heroines! Mr. Massey is right, there is more real drama in the rooms of a New York lodging house than in all the theatres of the Great White Way. Why not get some of the poetry, the color, the aroma of actual life onto the stage by an honest translation of all these things into dramatic terms in place of all this pussyfooting repetition of mere actualities?

MR. DRINKWATER'S "MARY STUART"

IT is related that Sir Walter Scott once refused to write a biography of Mary Stuart because he feared that the fascination of that wonderful woman and his own Jacobite leanings might result in a falsification of history. The spell of the Scottish queen is abiding and everlasting. I recall being delayed once at a small inn in the upper Rhone valley, on one of those days of exhausting heat and dust which visit that long gully in the mountains. It was too glaring to go out at midday and there was nothing to do but seek some entertainment within. I found a little book on "Mary Stuart, Queen and Martyr," by an excellent French abbé, and obtained a new angle on the subject. "A queen, young, beautiful, unfortunate and of the true faith." Surely here is enough for the exercise of that by no means the least creditable process of human activity, the weaving of myths. The good abbé had written quite an eloquent book; however, the evidence adverse to his thesis little troubled him. There is, of course, history, and there is fiction, and we must confess that there are times when the insight of the poet surpasses, in reading the truth, the more rational processes of the historian. "Mary Stuart, a History," may well designate a work. Perhaps Mr. Drinkwater is wise in calling

his "Mary Stuart" "a play." But the poet's insight is in it, and, when all has been said, the Queen of Scots remains one of the enigmas of history.

Mr. Drinkwater's drama opens with two men, an older and a much younger, conversing in an Edinburgh room of about "1900 or later." The younger has brought his trouble to his wiser friend, not so much for advice as to talk about it, after the manner of some natures. His adorable young wife, Margaret, has formed another attachment and has told him frankly and honestly. Neither has been untrue nor unloving; he has proved merely insufficient. But, of course, the young husband cannot admit this, or even so much as see it. "If she live finely," says the elder man, "she will take her love from no man unless he is unworthy." The young husband declares that he will share his love with no one, and the answer comes: "Boy, will you not share the sun of heaven, the beauty of the world?" Is Margaret, the young wife, "to have no better luck than that poor queen?" And he turns to a portrait of Mary Stuart which hangs over the mantelpiece, reading some verses inscribed beneath it, the last stanza of which runs:

Not Riccio nor Darnley knew
Nor Bothwell how to find
This Mary's best magnificence
Of the great lover's mind.

And now there is the rustle of a dress on the terrace without, and there stands the queen with these words on her mouth: "Boy, I can tell you everything." And immediately we are back in March, 1566, in Mary Stuart's room in Holyrood castle, that ill-lighted, litttle stone-begirt closet, the actual sight of which is such a shock to such as have accepted the canvases of "historical" painters. Now the dramatist unfolds to us simply, directly, without a superfluous word, his story of the matters preceding the murder of Riccio. Fascinating, imperious, a queen and, therefore, accountable to none in her right to be loved as in the prerogatives of her royalty, Mary recognizes with the fatal certainty of a second sight that failure is to be hers because of the insufficiency of any of those who love her to fill the void of her nature with a great passion. Riccio is a mere phrase maker and courtier in the conventionalities of courtship. His nature is too shallow to stir to a deep devotion and a large sacrifice. The queen scarcely interposes between him and his fate and laments, when he has been cruelly murdered on her very door sill, that he might not have been a nobler cause for her great quarrel and requital. Darnley, the king and her husband, is merely contemptible with his ribald songs and his petty jealousies. Even Bothwell,

who is at least direct and possessed of a certain bravado of masterfulness, cannot take the queen's whole heart, who, like Cleopatra, would have a lover wholly, heroically hers; a lover who could feel the world well lost in the fierce joy of possessing her, who could dare all and lose all for her sake. And Mary, one of the grandest of *les grandes amoreuses* in all history, plunged madly into intrigue, crime, imprisonment, death on the scaffold, because there was none among the men who loved her who could hold out to her the strong hand which she needed and feed the hunger, the craving, "the magnificence of the great lover's mind."

Mr. Drinkwater's play dramatizes no more than the Riccio incident, and its power is in the disclosure of character through the clash and personality of his personages; which is the same thing as saying that his power is a veritably dramatic one. I have not had the pleasure of seeing this play on the stage. If we did not know it already, its success might be predicted from its very economy of stroke. And, indeed, this is a feature which will strike any careful reader, as likewise the circumstance that the form is prose. It is also noticeable that except for one little touch as to the advice of one "Hugo Dubois," who "in an elaborate treatise on the coiffure"

advises "azure or lazuline gems" for the hair of women of fair complexion, there is scarcely a touch of what might be called local coloring or historical atmosphere in the whole play. Possibly this is the more justifiable in that Mary's story is after all here universalized to be applicable to all time. Most effective is the concluding touch. Poor Riccio has fallen; Darnley, "the king," who weakly pretends ignorance as to what he has procured, has departed from the queen's presence and Bothwell sends Mary Beaton to know if he can be admitted, to which the queen replies: "Not to-night, Beaton." And once more the song recurs on her lips:

> Not Riccio nor Darnley knew
> Nor Bothwell how to find
> This Mary's best magnificence
> Of the great lover's mind.

She opens the window as the candle gutters out and two "voices as of a dream are heard beyond." "It's a damned silly song," says the one. "Look at this queen, she tells you," says the other. For, alas! this human race of ours goes on and on and learns nothing.

To the documented cases of history and the critical examinations and controversies over "the casket letters," to Mary viewed as the protagonist in a great political struggle or the

victim of religious clash and bigotry let us add this analysis of a woman's heart, great in the magnificence of its capacity for love, frustrated in that for which it was created; a Cleopatra who could match her Ptolemy with a Darnley, perhaps even her Caesar with a Bothwell, but to whom there came no Antony to translate her into the fulfillment of a great passion, even if no more than a tragic one.

NEW MUSIC ON THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE

"ENTER Madame" is a lively comedy of situation and character. It has been staged with the success which its sure stage technique, its logical working out of incident and its ready and natural dialogue deserve. In a sprightly introduction, Mr. Woolcott lets us in back of the scenes sufficiently to learn how the chief personage was drawn from life, whence assuredly all chief and other persons should be drawn, a draft, so to speak, on the experiences of one of the authors and the interpreter of the title role. He tells us more of this lady's training and success, all of which is pleasant reading and pertinent enough. We are grateful to him for not telling us that in "Enter Madame" enters at last the long-expected indigenous American comedy triumphant. "Enter Madame" is conspicuous in not being so heralded.

Quoting somebody, who I suppose really knew—else why quote him?—I once said: "There are eleven original or primitive situations in comedy and no more." I received the next day, in consequence of this deliverance, a document which more nearly resembled a challenge to mortal combat than anything else outside of fiction. A list of the eleven original situations

was demanded, and instanter. As I did not propose then, and do not propose now to be bullied, I refused to deliver the goods. Maybe I know and maybe I don't; at any rate I shall never tell the other ten; but if the eleventh—and perhaps one or two others besides—be not the triangle, then I am very much mistaken. Somebody equally clever, if there be any such, or else it was my friend, Professor William Lyon Phelps, of Yale, once wrote that in the concert—or was it the orchestra?—of life all the music—or it was all the jangling?—is not performed on the triangle. And yet I doubt not that in that important work, the Universal Primer of Playmaking, a considerable chapter will be found devoted to triangulation. It is the best way in which to map out the ground; for, starting with Adam and Eve and Lilith, and continuing to Antony and Cleopatra and Octavia, down to the latest scenario of the latest gossamer film, men and women seem to persist in grouping themselves in threes.

"Enter Madame" is grouped in the eternal three. Now, when you have three cards—in most games—even although two only may be of a kind, it is important which shall be trumps. The triangle here is usual enough. Gerald, an elderly, neglected, philandering husband, Madame being much away; a fair widow, recently

young, somewhat embonpoint, rather humdrum, but in the way; Madame Lisa Della Robbia, a great singer, who returns, an artist to her finger tips, temperamental, adorable, quite capable of managing this or any situation. From the first moment we know that Madame is the trump. But how will she take the trick? Even the method is not unprecedented. Things are allowed to drift until the first decree in divorce is granted Gerald—we are to suppose for desertion, though that does not appear. Madame, who is supposed always to do the unexpected, on receiving the decree, disappoints her entourage by not flying into a passion. Instead she arranges, offhand, a nice little farewell dinner for her husband that was and the lady, Flora, who is to be her successor three months hence. Madame's and Gerald's son a grown young man, and his young betrothed, are also of the party. With these, her doctor, her chef, her secretary, her maid, most of them Italian, Madame is very much at home in her own house. And the talk turns on the old days of music, travel, adventure and romance which Madame and her husband had lived with these very people; Flora, the lady who is to marry, alone getting little by little more and more out of it. A call has come meanwhile from her manager

asking that Madame start for South America the next day at noon. She is prepared to accept. Flora is generously constrained to leave the sometime-husband and wife to talk the matter over. "Are we not wives-in-law?" says Madame. And the upshot is that although Flora interrupts them by phone from her flat below several times until the receiver is left off, Madame easily wins back her husband. Indeed, so complete is their absorption that they have forgotten completely the trifling circumstance that they are no longer man and wife. In the morning, with Flora and an army of reporters besieging the flat, the reunited couple are forced to an elopement by the back way to fulfill Madame's engagement in South America and escape the scandal created by their conduct.

There is, of course, much besides in the lively process of this comedy; a nice boy, the son of Madame; a nice girl, several temperamental Italians whose nature is well understood and depicted with all their charm, love of the arts and irresponsibility. Nor would I insinuate the least criticism of the recurrence of these familiar figures. It is as preposterous to demand original figures on the stage as in an account book, the combination, the ordering, the art of your arithmetic, that is literally what counts. In "Enter

Madame" there is a sufficiently novel ordering to give that pleasure of surprise in which comedy of this species at least largely subsists. Surprise in the expected, the expected wrought by novel means—here is the recipe. It is as easy as an omelet theoretically; and as tricky and precarious in the doing. And it will not attain to that realm of art in which abide the perfect comedy and the perfect omelet cheek by jowl, unless it has that last perfection and seasoning, distinction of style. This, in common with most of our good plays, as well as the bad and indifferent, "Enter Madame" has not. And I doubt not that the authors would scorn the idea that this is in any wise a want. "A picture of life," their defender might say, "must be like life; and neither life nor the dialogue of life is distinguished nor maintained by this quality of which you speak, style." But this is just where we miss it. A comedy, no matter how realistic, is really not life, but life translated into the highly artificial and conventional terms of the stage. We cannot improve the stage by making it unconventional. We can enhance and perfect the art of the stage by realizing and using to the best advantage the conventionalities of which it consists. One of these is distinction in dialogue, quality in expression; not a contradiction of what

occurs in life, but a heightening of it into the terms of art. Until we get this and the much more that this essential principle involves all the individualities and temperamentalities—which are as unreal off the stage as on—and all the little realities, such as telephones, for example, which are as wearisome on the stage as off—will not help us far toward an actual restoration of the drama to the sphere of a true art.

"THE GREATEST PLAY SINCE SHAKESPEARE"

I WAS greeted the other day by a literary lady of my acquaintance, member of several societies for the improvement of this, that or the other, with the query:

"And have you read 'Caius Gracchus'?"

Not being possessed of the ubiquitous powers of reading everything that anybody writes which some of my unhappy kind allege that they possess, I replied that I did not even know that Caius Gracchus had been written either up or down.

"Why," said my fair informant, "It's the greatest play since Shakespeare!"

Strange to say, I was not stunned; for the phrase sounded familiar. Indeed there have been scores of "the greatest play since Shakespeare." They bud and bloom in every age and go their fragile way to oblivion. Some of them I have exhumed in my day; but lacking the ubiquitous reading powers alluded to above, I suppose that many a one has escaped me. On examination, so far as I can learn, this particular "greatest play since Shakespeare" is the furthest western example of its species, having put forth its hardy petals, if one can judge from the present residence of Mr. Dreiser, on the very

margin of the Pacific. Indeed I feel that we may agree with Mr. Dreiser, who is our informant as to the precise degree of the greatness of "Caius Gracchus," in admitting without reservation and even remembering the "movies," that this is the greatest play which has been written in Los Angeles since Shakespeare.

I really do not hold any brief against "Caius Gracchus," which is a worthy enough effort in its no very unusual kind. But I am interested in Mr. Dreiser's Introduction and in how it comes that a writer of his conspicuousness, should suggest so surprising an inference. Ought Mr. Dreiser to have known better? Or was it not to have been suspected even of him? But what does he really say? He says that for three centuries English metric drama has remained sterile; that the Elizabethan period carried no appeal to the generations that followed; that the "drab poison of Puritanism" killed the old drama which was "Rabelaisian," most of it, anyhow. That pretty word, "Rabelaisian" will cover Mr. Dreiser's own sins in this kind, by the way, far better than those of old Marlowe and Massinger. However, let us be fair. Mr. Dreiser means that no one English author has held the stage as Molière, Racine and Corneille in France, except Shakespeare. And perhaps he is right in his suggestion that Shakespeare's very eminence

is the reason for this. But can Mr. Dreiser be ignorant that Fletcher and Jonson held the English stage with Shakespeare for three generations? Dryden for at least two, Goldsmith with Farquhar and other lesser men for as many? And is he unaware of our splendid modern literary drama from Byron to Tennyson, Browning and Swinburne, that he can mention only Stephen Philips, whose plays are only a little more stageable than these greater productions and a great deal more so than "Caius Gracchus."

But what is more remarkable is that Mr. Dreiser should have mistaken "Caius Gracchus" for an Elizabethan play. The line of tragedies on Roman history is a long one, extending down through innumerable examples to productions such as Bird's famous "Gladiator" here in America in which Edwin Forrest achieved one of his greatest successes, a tragedy, with all its faults and robustness of an earlier school, alike more actable and more "Shakespearean"—whatever that may mean—than is estimable "Caius Gracchus." The average Elizabethan play has a plot of some magnitude, it realizes its personages, it has movement, rarely standing still on a single situation; it is written in authentic blank verse and it is usually embellished with imagery and uplifted with poetry. Mr. Gregory's plot is meagre, not much more than a

situation, the downfall of Gracchus on the loss of his tribuneship and, according to this play, largely because of a lack of common sense on the part of Gracchus, which keeps him prating platitudes instead of taking the ordinary precautions of a prudent man. Mr. Gregory's Gracchus is a sublimated Brutus, to say no more of him. His patricians are a wonderfully wicked lot, addicted to crimes which remind one much more of "Ben Hur" than of Suetonius. The naughty young Rutilius is a pasteboard roué and the daughter of the Scipios talks more like the daughter of Cicero. Some of the speeches are interminable and others, like the two-page harangue of the courtesan about her profession, are irrelevant. Fletcher would have painted her in three lines and been done with it. And as to Mr. Gregory's crowd, crowds often lose their senses, but never so completely their wit.

Elizabethan plays are written to a large extent, as I have said, in authentic blank verse; they are frequently possessed of distinction in style; and poetry is the element in which the old drama lives. Mr. Gregory's verse often totters on the verge of prose, and while all of it is blank it is not always the accepted length. "To strut about, the masters of our people and our state" is four-syllables good measure for such a verse, and "When Troiia's prince first saw his Helen's

radiance gleam" is two. And "If I interpret thy mind properly" is ten syllables long, but not verse. Mr. Gregory is really a very indifferent metrist. As to poetry, the music, the lilt, the levitation of it, this is about the best which I have been able to find in "Caius Gracchus."

> What shall I gain? What does the bard that sings
> His song in lone waste wilds; the poet when
> He fashions out his measure; or when first
> She gazes on her infant, what's the gain
> The mother hath of all her rending pains?
> What is their gain? What mine? A dream made true;
> A something yearning, straining, here within,
> That's brought to being.

Mr. Dreiser finds the "inspiration" of this sort of thing "plainly that of Spenser, Shakespeare, Jonson and Dryden, not uninfluenced by the refinement of Pope." A great deal of inspiration for a very little result.

But it is not quite fair to Mr. Gregory, the victim of the extravagant eulogy of an unwise friend, thus to hit him over Mr. Dreiser's shoulders. I am inclined to think that Mr. Gregory has probably heard far more about the ancients and several other things than Mr. Dreiser, even though he carries back the manners of the empire a couple of hundred years to republican Rome. Mr. Gregory's dialogue is direct and barring an occasional lapse in taste, a rare pseudo-poetic word like "erstwhile," and an un-

Elizabethan "he'th" for "he hath," he writes good, average American translated into the second person singular. The ambitions scene of the Furies should be compared, not with Macbeth's witches or, as Mr. Dreiser suggests, with the "Eumenides of Aeschylus," but with—no, I find no precise parallel in my reading for this unimpressive effort in the supernatural. Sounder archaeology, the realization of personality, cogency in action, dramatic power, poetic lift, philosophic vision—and we may yet have from Los Angeles, home of the movies, a drama that will "bear comparisons." As it is, "the greatest play since Shakespeare" leads to the inquiry once made about "a dog after Landseer" "What's he after him for?"

GUITRY'S "DEBURAU"

MR. H. GRANVILLE BARKER, long an acknowledged master in the drama and in stage craft, prefixes a suggestive note, and all too short, to his translation of Sacha Guitry's novel comedy, "Deburau." Here is the translation of a play avowedly made "for English-speaking actors," not for the English-reading public, except incidentally; and the further purpose is disclosed in the words "to provide * * * as nearly as might be parallel opportunities to those the French had enjoyed in the production of the play." While disclaiming any theory of dramatic translation, what could be happier and in a way more refreshing? Somebody once defined translation as the art of disfiguring innocent books by putting them into a jerkin in which even their own mother might not know them. The translator is apt to mix up his paints for blank verse, or muddle them for prose. If not, he may lose the sense in riding after rhymes or lose his rhyme in seeking a sense quite other than that of the original. Mr. Barker says: "It was easy and obvious then to keep to the irregular verse, if the difficulty of peppering it with rhymes was faced." This he has done exceedingly well, preserving, I should say, in the result not only the meaning of his original "detail by detail,"

but keeping a certain ease and litheness, which English blank verse could not have reproduced, while maintaining a variety which no set metrical form could preserve.

The comedy "Deburau" is a huge Parisian success. Sacha Guitry, the author, is the son of the contemporary actor, M. Lucien Guitry, of a great and deserved reputation. The author has added to his fame as a playwright that of an actor and interpreter of his own principal role, a circumstance the more striking in that this play presents in Deburau the career of a celebrated actor in whose footsteps follows unexpectedly and triumphantly his own son. Such a parallel would be sure to take the Parisian imagination; and an artistic success in Paris should be—and usually is—echoed around the world. The subject, too, in a larger sense, is one of a peculiar appeal. The stage, the actor, that dual life, on and off the boards, a duplicity, be it said with no malign accent on the word, offering so many contrasts express and implied; Marie Duplessis, "*la dame aux camelias*"—for she, too, figures in this play though not as in Dumas—the deification, or at least the sentimentalizing, of womanhood in her most alluring, dangerous, triumphant and pathetic role of the destroyer: what more could be wanted of the universal material of life and of the stage?

"Deburau" is emphatically a comedy for the stage; by which I do not mean to raise as to Mr. Barker's translation, much less as to the original, any question as to that quality of distinction in diction and style which everybody knows is in France a condition without which success must be courted in vain. But a play for the stage is one in which the capabilities of the theatre, of setting, of the spoken word and its accompanying gesture are ever in the author's mind. A play conceived for the stage does not begin by telling the scene setter, the stage upholsterer, the light manipulator and everybody else in seven pages of directions exactly what he must do, instead of silently enlisting his services as a humble and inevitable coadjutor. And a play for the stage does not throw the obvious in your face in person or in dialogue. The first act of "Deburau" is a model of suggestion and restraint, as each member of the troupe of the Théâtre des Funambules stands out in his personality, from the "barker," or runner, whose business it is to cry up the play to passers-by, to Robillard, the thrifty manager and the little—and, we may suppose, deformed—money-taker who sends her roses to the great Pierrot unbeknown, and receives them back from him in an outburst of careless and indiscriminate generosity.

The character of Deburau, the actor, is as

subtile and natural as it is French; a certain delicate fatalism pervades it. There is nothing flamboyant or self-assertive in this Pierrot, whose very success in his pantomine is silence. It is only on being roused that he is drawn out, as by the reporter in reminiscence of his past, by love which comes to him and then flies away in a trice and in the eloquent passage of the last act on the actor's calling. For the rest, his is a sweet complaisancy and content with "this quaint world" as it is and for what fate will uncover to us, alas! only too soon. He does not want even to know who it is that he has found to love after twenty years of "running away from women." And when he finds that his place in Marie's love is tenanted by his successor, his words are: "I was just going, as you see; I didn't mean to interrupt"; for "fairyland" is after all not to be his in this world. How should one expect it? And poor Pierrot departs with his little boy, his birdcage and Fifi, his dog.

Seven years pass; Deburau has fallen ill and is poor. He has given over acting, but always he awaits the coming of the peerless lady who has once loved him. His son has grown up, a fine handsome lad, secretly ambitious to follow his father in his career. The father is somewhat piqued at the idea and there is a charming bit of insight into the sensitive nature seemingly so

callous that goes to make up the actor's temperament. At last Marie, the beloved, comes and the meeting is such as "fairyland" contrives not. Marie has often "been prevented from coming." Old Robillard has prompted her visit, not love, perhaps hardly compassion. But she is learning, now, too, what is love; for she is to lose her lover. Moreover, hearing that Deburau is ill, she has brought her doctor. "I have waited for this!" says Deburau. "For what? For you to come—bringing your doctor! A doctor—when you are here! A doctor—when you are gone!" And it is a fine bit of irony that the doctor, not knowing his patient by name, should prescribe that to rally his spirits he go to the theatre to see Gaspard Deburau.

I have no space for the unexpected turn of the last act in which Deburau fails on the stage to live again in his son. The eloquence and truth of the fine passage about acting are worthy of all the praise that it has received. It is gratifying, too, to meet with so unconventional and so artistic a conclusion. Why tie a knot in every thread when there is joy and beauty, too, in the skein unraveled?

A TRENCHANT SATIRE ON THE WAR

"LILULI" is Illusion, and it is a pity that for clarity's sake, in the English translation, this production was not so called. The note descriptive, printed on the temporary paper cover which protects the binding, for the information of the general reader and the guidance in particular of the reviewer, calls this book "a farce." And clearly the form, the setting by way of scene, the procedure by way of dialogue, all is dramatic; but when we consider the dramatis personae, which contains a score of "crowds" and choruses, distinguishable each from the other, besides such personages as Master-God, Duerer's Beast, Polichinello and Buridan the Ass, it is plain that representation on any stage could scarcely have been contemplated. The designation "farce," too, is peculiarly misleading; for the situation of personal predicament, real merriment and fun for fun's sake, all are foreign to the ironic, satirical atmosphere of this strange and original production, its dealing in masses by way of abstraction, its allegory, its premeditated confusion, its bitter probing beneath appearances, its sardonic pessimism. "Lilluli" is really a trenchant satire; its subject the disillusion which has fallen on our sometime smug world. The author takes no sides, he

spares none, and he leaves us in the end with no hope. Read superficially, it is an unpleasant book; read carefully, a terrible one.

I came across "Liluli" first a couple of months ago. It repelled me. I could not understand how the author of "Jean Christoph," that extraordinary success in French fiction just before the war, could have written such a book, and I failed to get up the curiosity necessary to find out. Turning up again in a batch of books for review the other day, I was stimulated to a second reading and an answer to this question. Romain Rolland, it will be remembered, was sometime professor of the history of music at the Sorbonne (University of Paris), a distinguished biographer, especially of Beethoven and of Tolstoy, by which latter he has been deeply affected in his opinions. Born in Burgundy, in eastern France, Rolland, while of many generations of French ancestry, has none the less in him much of the Teutonic spirit. Indeed, "Jean Christoph" with its German hero, was an effort to reconcile the contrasts, antagonisms and mutual misunderstandings which separate Teutonic and Latin cultures; and it would have been difficult to conceive of one better fitted for that delicate task than Rolland, with his enthusiasm at times borderng on sentimentality, that passion for art, especially

music, and that species of transcendentalism which we associated, at least before the war, with the Germanic genius. But Rolland possessed, too, the clear, logical training and polish and finesse which we associate as inevitably with the traditions and culture of France. When the war came M. Rolland was one of those unfortunates in whose very veins the clash of empires throbbed. Born a Frenchman, though living a cosmopolitan life, it is not for any one to judge his position, much less his conduct, of which I know little. A man past the years of military service, he appears to have lived in Switzerland during the conflict. That he hated war is assuredly not to his nor to any man's discredit. Whether he is, or was, an actual pacifist I do not know or care. Certainly the satire of "Liluli" accepts the text of Mercutio: "A plague on both your houses!"

The setting in "Liluli" is a mountainous country; certain roads wind upward and across the stage, leading to a bridge which spans a deep ravine, splitting the stage from the curtain backward in two. The chief actors speak from a field which occupies three-quarters of the left foreground, which is above the road. Crowds are continually passing up the road, impelled, where not by mere restlessness, by Liluli, the goddess of

illusion, who sings like a bird and floats rather than walks, leading on her victims. Polichinello, dignified cousin of English Punch, but provided with the family hump—the deformity of satire—comments sardonically throughout on what is going on; children marshalled by their schoolmasters and restrained from looking about at the birds and the primroses as they read, marching along, about Hannibal crossing the Alps; the dreamer who describes the landscape without looking at it; the sensible man who observes everything and is none the wiser for it. Then comes Janot in his donkey cart, typical peasant of France, who, when the donkey balks at going further, preempts his claim on the spot where he stops and starts digging in his beloved mother earth. Soon comes Altair, visionary youth, Florentine, fair-haired, following Illusion and a form of Love which Polichinello declares 2000 years out of date. Love escapes Altair, but Liluli at last charms him to sleep and turns her blandishments on Polichinello. She offers him anything; "one hump more—or less, at your will," and even he barely escapes her enchantment when on the very brink of the precipice.

And now the satire becomes more savage. In the midst of two rival crowds extolling each their scores of saints, Latin and Germanic, there enters "a handsome, majestic, dandified old man

of slightly Levantine accent, noble gesture which relapses into vulgarity when he is off his guard." He is attended by Truth, a woman in Harlequin costume, who trundles for him his go-cart full of "little gods for sale."

"Look, father, gods at reduced prices for families, a dollar and a quarter a pair, seventy-five cents each; a thoroughly reliable article. Take it? I'll let you have it for thirty cents."

The hawker calls himself Master-God, to which Polichinello replies: "This is all very well, but what of the Old Father?"

"What Father?"

"The Old Father up there. Are you not afraid of His wrath?"

Master-God is amused, but politely explains that he is really He, to which Polichinello says "Bah!"

Later in the play Truth is carried in triumph blindfolded, decorated, bedizened, cloaked and guarded by dervishes, sentries, diplomatists and journalists. She struggles free and half naked for a moment only to be recaptured and robed ceremoniously once more while the crowd is admonished to hide their eyes until told when to look.

Two groups of people, the Gallipoulets and the Hurluberloches are picnicking on either side of the ravine. They repair the

bridge and, on good terms with each other, pass refreshments and compliments, when the diplomatists intervene:

"Great God, what are you making a bridge for? By what right? In a state that is well ordered whatever is not permitted is interdicted."

And they establish customs, excises, examinations for disease and demand that the bridge be strengthened.

"For what?"

"For cannon."

And here Polonius mounts the rostrum to explain: "Modeste Napoleon Polonius, delegate of the peace congress."

"The point in these happy days," he says, "is to choose, like the rabbit, with what sauce you wish your giblets stewed. Do you prefer being slaughtered above ground, under ground, in the air or in the water?"

A ridiculous, a saddening scene is that in which poor Janot, forced from his land, on his ass, and Hanot on his German mule, meet on the bridge, both good humored, each willing to let the other pass, until egged on by the fat men (profiteers), the diplomatists, the intellectuals and those of fettered mind, they fall to fighting and both roll over into the abyss. The same fate is that of Altair, the youth, and his counter-

part and friend, Antares. And the intellectuals thereupon remark:

"They have passed. Oh, what an epical spectacle! Down they roll! A glorious chill of heroic sweetness moistens me all up my back (Don't lean over too far.) Oh, what a sublime fate!"

In the end Polichinello, who also dared not go with Truth, thinks to escape. But everything collapses "fighting people, furniture, crockery, poultry, stones, earth and all." Polichinello disappears in the heap and Liluli sings:

> Wait, ere you laugh and mock, my friend,
> At fate, ah, wait until the end.

This is but a taste of this wholesale satire on mankind. I have been unable to see a copy of "Liluli" as the author wrote it. And I rather suspect that much of the poetry and nearly all of the style—which means so much in anything French—has evaporated in the process of translation, which is anonymous and appears to have been none too well done. The pictures of Mesereel in their grotesqueness and studied crudity seem appropriate to a subject in which beauty can find no place.

NO IMPROVEMENT ON VICTOR HUGO

"I FEEL that the author of 'Clair de Lune' has created what might be called a new idiom in dramatic writing. Its curiously and brilliantly imagined harmony of plot, characters and background has a strange and disturbing flavor which, once tasted, cannot be forgotten. Over it all, like the moonlight of its title, shines the quality of fantasy. It is 'such stuff as dreams are made on.'" Thus writes Mr. Edward Sheldon, the well-known dramatist; and on reading "Clair de Lune" we wonder at these words. But Edward Sheldon as a dramatic critic is not our topic today.

When I took up this play I said, as a reader of old fiction—or must I say, as an old reader of fiction? "Ah! Ursus, Dea, Gwymplane! Of course, 'L'Homme qui Rit.'" And I might have spared myself this recognition of the obvious, as a note on the false title declares that "suggestions" as well as the names of some of the personages are "taken from" Victor Hugo's well-known novel. I then looked for some unpublished chapters in this touching and pathetic story. Sir Harry Johnston has of late carried on the story of the Dombeys and of Mr. Shaw's Mrs. Warren's eccentric daughter, much to the delectation of readers. But this play is not of

that agreeable type. In fact, it seems less to expand than to contract figures, incidents and situations from Hugo's ample pages, changing his wide historic atmosphere to the stifling artificialities of a corrupt and heartless court in a fantastic no-man's land and losing in the process, I should say, most of the human appeal.

"The man who laughs," which is a better translation than "The Laughing Man," it will be remembered, is the terrible story of a child of noble English parentage, stolen out of malice and for revenge, and submitted to a horrible surgical operation by which his facial expression is permanently fixed in a hideous harlequin grin. He grows up in the company of mountebanks, fathered by an old man, absurdly called somewhere in this play "a doctor of philosophy," and a blind maiden, Dea, who loves him for the real beauty of his character. Restored to his title and his rank, the deformed Gwymplane suffers, in the circle of the nobility, the untold agony which his deformity has brought upon him; and in the end he returns to Dea, who alone understands him, only to see her die aboard a boat in which they are seeking escape, he following her to his death in the sea. There is poetry and pathos in Hugo's tale, and the temptation of Gwymplane by a noble lady who is unnaturally at-

tracted to him by his deformity is only an episode in the wide and varied scene.

In "Clair de Lune," by Michael Strange, who it is whispered audibly is really Mrs. John Barrymore, this last-mentioned incident becomes a main feature of the plot. Relieved of its moonlight, the story tells of a Queen, "a sharp-featured, neurotic-looking woman," we may add of middle years. She is attended, among others, by Prince Charles, "a slender, exotic-looking gentleman," who is her "cousin" and her heir; and also by the Duchess of Beaumont, a younger, illegitimate sister of hers, betrothed to Prince Charles. Boredom is a common characteristic of these titled people, and who can wonder? The betrothed couple, who loathe each other, are represented as trying to beguile the tedious hours with croquet. Parenthetically, mark how this beats out Shakespeare's Cleopatra at billiards. A troupe of mountebanks intervene, performing by night in the royal park. The jaded nobility wake up miraculously to the remarkable novelty of a pantomime. Charles, out of sheer ennui, is attracted by Dea's beauty and arranges to have her brought to his apartments; while his precious betrothed as suddenly conceives an unholy passion for Gwymplane and his hideous grin, and also arranges an assignation. Mrs. Barrymore's—

or shall we say this Strange—Gwymplane is further deformed with "distorted legs," though exactly how he contrives to perform his feats of agility in the pantomime with this handicap is not quite clear. The upshot of this double intrigue of this precious couple, who are to be married tomorrow, is the discovery of each to the other and to the Queen, who in the end turns out not the rival of the Duchess for the love of Charles, but the mother of that now illegitimate Prince, Gwymplane being the true heir. There is a shadowy villian, Phedro, who wanders about through the play, but just what he is about it would be difficult to say. In some respects he seems to have been rather respectable compared to Charles and his Queen and his Duchess. So much for Mr. Sheldon's "brilliantly imagined harmony of plot" and of "character" and of "background."

Now for "the new idiom in dramatic writing."

"The Duchess appears to me exactly like a bent hairpin," says the Queen, "adjusting her lorgnette."

"Go along, Charles. At any rate, you have a sort of sleight-of-hand manner of looking at your watch that makes me rather nervous," says the same "neurotic-looking" lady.

"What in the world is one tired from? What does one rest for?" maunders the weary Duchess, "in a rather lost manner."

"A servant is something to absorb the spittle of their irritability."

We may agree with Mr. Sheldon that this is "a new idiom in dramatic writing." But sometimes the dialogue strains at even a further newness."

"I'll make you feel," says the wicked Phedro, "as if you were falling down an abyss of knives": here at least is a threatened new sensation. No marvel that Gwymplane calls Phedro "a squinting rodent," and that Phedro retorts "acidly." "His eloquence would steal the pollen from a flower" sounds somewhat like what some people sometimes call poetry. No such nonsense, of course, as any jingle of rhymes or swing of metre; but "sob stuff," thus: "I feel as if we were in a black barge upon a scarlet sea, as if in a moment it would dip over the horizon line and we should be lost forever together." Or, "I see a million pale ribbons fluttering through gray vapor. They are widening into rivers of color, into vast dazzling spaces and some divine form is shining through now and sweeping all the darkness away off the world, with his golden wings." There is nothing like this in Victor Hugo. Is this possibly what Mr. Sheldon calls "the quality of fantasy"?

That a blind girl should be sent down a long avenue of cypresses to stop at the "first white marble door" is a trifle. Even that the distorted

hero, saluted as Prince Ian of Vancluse, in the scene of discovery—of pretty nearly everything—should cry out "Oh, I cannot stand this hellish whirl another instant. It is biting my ankles off" —strange occupation for a "hellish whirl" to be biting a hero's ankles—even this is trivial or perhaps merely "such stuff as (some folks') dreams are made on," to quote the dramatic critic once more. Less like a dream and more like the banalities of a decadent spirit is the loss in nobility and interest of every one of Victor Hugo's figures and their degradation into a series of inconsequent and meaningless marionettes, whose only resemblance to human beings is in their essential vulgarity and immorality. Perhaps the glamor of other lights than that of the moon, handsome costumes and scenery and the conjunction of two notable personages of the stage in the cast may make this kind of thing go for a time. But to any one modestly acquainted with poetry, drama and the stage, it is repugnant to all.

"THE EMPEROR JONES"

THIS volume contains three plays of the kind that act, and by an author obviously at home in the workmanship of the stage. By this I do not mean one who has so self-consciously labored in his craft that the scaffolds on the buildings of his construction are still standing; but rather one to whom the stage and its methods are simply a means to the effective telling of his story. These plays are in the popular mode which chooses to represent the drama of the ordinary man in the ordinary events of an ordinary life: that is all with a saving reservation assuredly for "The Emperor Jones." But he would be a strange reactionary who would go back to the old idea that in the hero there must be always something heroic, something dilated with the exaggeration of romance, distorted with unusual crime, decorated with extraordinary virtues. To be sure, in this banishment of the heroic we have lost not a little, but possibly the most that we have lost is novelty. Although I suppose that it must all come back to the old question, shall the author seek to arouse an emotion in his auditors which shall find expression in the words, "How strange!" or shall he be content with what after all may be the more difficult task, elicit the exclamation, "How true."

There is no side in any of these plays,they are written simply, directly, in the speech proper to the characters concerned. There is no attempt to get the reader off the ground and they would be none the better for such an attempt. "Diff'rent" is what Mr. Shaw would call an unpleasant play. Caleb, a young captain of a whaler in a small New England port, is about to marry Emma, the daughter of a fellow captain and a neighbor. The young people have grown up together and the bride-to-be, of a romantic turn of mind, nourished more or less on cheap fiction, prides herself on Caleb's and her difference from those about them. But a tale is told her of Caleb in his last voyage and of the brown girls of Tahiti, or one of them at least, and of a trick that his fellows put up on Caleb. Caleb is too honest to deny the truth and Emma refuses to marry him, as after all he has proved not to be "diff'rent." The two remain friends, however, Caleb always hoping. Thirty years later, on his last coming home he finds his poor old love utterly infatuated with a worthless nephew of his who works upon her folly for what he can get out of it. She has transformed her staid old home with gaudy curtains and hangings, victrola and the like, and Caleb's favorite chair has been sent to the attic. The picture of the old doting woman, in short skirts, high-heeled shoes

and powdered face is repulsive in the exteme and so unusual a departure from that norm which after all has something to do with fiction, as it has to do with life, that we recoil from it as from a thing unnatural. And yet it is a tribute to Mr. O'Neill's art that we do so recoil. In the upshot Caleb hangs himself and Emma, pitifully disillusioned, follows him.

"The Straw" is less unpleasant, concerning as it does the passionate soul of a young consumptive and how she stirs a fellow patient into a realization of his powers to write, what was to him a flirtation at first ending on the verge of tragedy in the union of the doomed young couple. There is good character sketching in the Carmody family, from the brute drunkard father to the children, but all this and the scene, chiefly in a sanatorium, is depressing. However, "why should art be joyous?" says our friend, M. Fin du Siècle. "Life is not joyous; life is even very depressing." "But art has nothing to do with life," says another of our new critics. "Then why be miserable?" queries still another. Whether I like a given subject or not is one sort of a question; whether, the subject granted, the work upon it is well done, is quite another. Mr. O'Neill has drawn his figures to the life, what more have we a right to demand?

But among these plays "The Emperor Jones" is "diff'rent," and in every wise deserving the praise which I have recently seen bestowed upon it by reviewers and the success which, in the skilful hands of Charles Gilpin, the negro actor, it has had upon the stage. Emperor Jones is a some-time Pullman car porter who, escaped from justice for killing a cheating pal over a game of crap and felling the guard of his chain gang, has made his way to one of the West India islands and become the "emperor" of the day. We meet him after his siesta on the last day of his rule. His entire "court" to the last old woman has deserted him, and to the sound of the distant beat of the tom-tom, which he knows means the gathering of all his some-time subjects against him, he plans to make his way across the island in the night to a French gunboat and make his escape to the fat bank account which his extortions have gathered and which awaits him in a neighboring port. In conversation with a cowardly, taunting cockney Englishman, his accomplice, all this is brought out; and, likewise, the supreme confidence which Emperor Jones, tricked out in his taudry uniform, has in himself and his ability "wid trash niggers like dese yere," to "outguess, outrun, outfight an' outplay de whole lot o' dem ovah de board any time o' de day er night!"

Emperor Jones has his superstitions, however, one is that only a silver bullet can kill him, and his revolver after the other chambers shall have been exhausted contains one such bullet for need should there ever be need. By nightfall he reaches the place on the border of the forest where he has cached his food, but in the approaching darkness he fails to find it. He plunges, however, into the forest with its weird blackness and glinting moonbeams. As he wanders on alternately confident but with rising fears, as the tom-tom throbs, visions come to him. In terror he sees once more Jim, whom he had killed at crap, and in desperation fires one of his precious bullets at the spectre. Again he sees the chain gang and the guard whom he is about to fell with his spade, and another chamber of his revolver discharged frees him of that. A vision of the slave mart and his old mammy about to be sold takes still another until, stripped and torn in his struggle through the jungle, he lives over again in imagination the ancient beast worship of his African forefathers and sacrifices his last, his one silver bullet, to the destruction of the crocodile-god about to devour him. Of course, his shots have located him and his enemies are upon him. And in the end he is drawn out of the jungle, a pace or two from where he entered it, shot to death with the silver bullets

for the incantations attending the casting of which the Voodoo tom-toms had beaten all night. "Emperor Jones" is original as it is forceful. The atmosphere of the moonlit forest jungle, pulsating with the throb of the tom-tom, rising and falling with the fears and hallucinations of Jones, reaching a trumpet crash and then silence with his death; the sure, persistent touch in the portrayal of that strange mixture of confidence and cowardice so peculiarly true to the type represented; the mastery of the dialect of Jones—these are fine things finely done.

THE STAGE FROM BETTERTON TO IRVING

IN PROFESSOR ODELL'S "Shakespeare From Betterton to Irving" we have an exceedingly interesting and valuable book, all the more so because the author has allowed his material, which is abundant and well ordered, to tell his story. And that story concerns the fortunes of the Shakespearean plays on the stage from the reopening of the theatres on the return of King Charles to a time within our own contemporary recollection, including not only the stage history of the plays, but the manner of their presentation and the vicissitudes of the text at the hands of managers, actors, amenders, theorists and moralists.

There is a nice question, much mooted in the books, as to whether Shakespeare is better read or better seen on the stage, and of course the answer must depend on the nature of the reading and the seeing, which is much the same thing as the reader and the seer. The hearing of "The Merchant of Venice" or "Cymbeline" as the late Dr. Horace Howard Furness used to read them was a rare privilege and a precious memory. But even more vivid is our recollection of the Shylock of Irving, of Miss Terry's Portia and Beatrice, and the Hamlet of Forbes Robertson.

Indubitably a play which will not act is not a play, whatever other fine name it may go by. And it is always a marvel how actable—I had almost written how actorproof—Shakespeare is. His plays are really difficult to spoil on the stage, although it is amazing how frequently that difficult feat is accomplished. Professor Odell's book casts a flood of light on just this point, affording us in the process a singular commentary on the growth of British taste and appreciation, alike for the art of acting and for the larger significance of Shakespeare's works.

Nothing is so conservative and traditional as the stage, nor can anything be more certain than the gradual evolution of its successive features from age to age, however bewildered we may become at times in the details. At the Restoration a very definite process of change in the stage itself had already set in. To Burbage, who first played the great tragedy parts in Shakespeare's lifetime, the stage was a platform for declamation. The auditors in the pit actually stood about it on three sides, and such meager decorations as the time afforded were confined more or less to the rear. The stage, now for over 100 years, has become a picture, framed, in which the decorations have assumed the similitude of the actual by means of scenes and flies fashioned in perspective. A careful perusal of Professor

Odell's book gives us the steps by which this transformation has come about, with much diverting detail by the way. For example, the absence of a drop curtain on the old stage, meeting with the demand for a change of scene, resulted in the absurd practice of changing the scene with the actors on the stage. It does not seem to have occurred to any one that a curtain might be lowered at such a moment, and then raised. It was a generation after the introduction of the drop curtain before anybody thought of lowering it between the acts. And when at length that momentous possibility was realized a painted drop was devised, similar to the scenes which had formerly remained set in the intermissions, the green baize curtain being reserved to mark, as formerly, the conclusion of the play.

But if the simplicity and incongruity of the scenes even in comparatively late times amuse us, even more ludicrous to our senses is the old costuming. It is surprising how recent a development is that of consistency of setting and costume—I will not speak of historical accuracy, for that is quite outside of the question. We laugh at the incongruity of the medieval sacred plays which conceived of the Nativity as taking place amid the rigors of a Yorkshire winter, but neither Pope, an editor of Shakespeare, nor Fielding, a great novelist, would have seen any

incongruity in Macbeth attired in a full bottom wig—as became the dignity of tragedy—and the red coat and gold lace trappings of a contemporary British major general. The reader may see this figure in the frontispiece of Rowe's "Shakespeare," 1709, reproduced by Professor Odell, and he may likewise see from the same work Hamlet attired as Dr. Johnson and his mother seated in the likeness of Queen Anne beneath a portrait of "the buried majesty of Denmark," arrayed as the Duke of Marlborough.

It would appear that a certain conventional wardrobe was accepted for the stage for several generations, and it consisted of three sorts. First in order of antiquity came costume *à la Romaine*, a cuirass, lofty-crested helmet, buskins and heavy gloves. That delightful tragedy garment, the sweeping toga, doughtily to be tossed over the shoulder, had not yet come in. Secondly, there was the Asiatic-heroic, involving flowing—very flowing—robes, a turban, towering and feathered, and a scimitar; and lastly, there was the European, no matter of what era, represented by the costume of the moment, or rather a limp or so behind. The dresses of the actresses of old time were simply awesome. No one could then complain of scanty attire upon the stage. The question was to find the woman in the caparisons. When Mrs. Bracegirdle acted the "Indian

Queen," befeathered, befurbelowed and befanned, with two black pages bearing up a stupendous train and supporting a canopy rather than an umbrella over her head, there could have been very little room for anything else on the stage. Even as late as 1778 Mrs. Hartley, as Cleopatra, her hair *à la pompadour*, her spreading robes of state, hooped and garlanded, throned voluminously on a Chippendale armchair—she must have been quite unapproachable even by Antony.

Another interesting feature of Professor Odell's work is the complete account which he gives of the acting versions of Shakespeare's plays. The awe and veneration in which we hold every syllable of the Shakespearean text—the grave attention which we give to what James Russell Lowell once called "every Elizabethan goose-print"—was in no wise characteristic of our English forefathers. Shakespeare had taken his own wherever he found it; why should not his followers take of Shakespeare whatever they chose? And they certainly did exercise this prerogative from the scandal of Dryden's "Tempest," in which a boy who had never seen a girl is created to match Miranda who had never seen a boy, to the farces cut out of the comedies, "Macbeth," Davenanted into an opera, and "King Lear" Tatified into a comedy ending.

However, some of these remakings of Shakespeare for the stage are not so reprehensible. The conditions of staging had changed as well as the public taste, and some of the adaptations, such as that of "Richard III," by Colley Cibber, really make for dramatic unity and coherency. It may not be generally appreciated that this particular version of Cibber has held the stage almost to today. The late Mr. Mansfield acted, I believe, no other. As to earlier times, the great Garrick never acted "King Lear," except with Tate's happy ending in which Lear is restored to all of his five wits and Cordelia married to Edgar, while the same great actor's acting version of "Romeo and Juliet" arranged for the lovers a tender meeting in the tomb before death overwhelmed them.

Tampering with the classics is a very serious offense. But this is the point of view of the scholar. We should never cease to rejoice that Shakespeare was not a scholar, but a dramatist and an actor and a manager as well as a poet. I think that Shakespeare would have been the last man to regard the text of his plays as sacrosanct. The usages of his stage, as of ours, admitted alterations, cutting, adjustment, change and adaptation. This was what Shakespeare did to his predecessors and what he would have welcomed—and what he certainly got—at the

hands of those who followed him; though it is to be confessed that success alone can justify the process, and he is a bold man who dares attempt this species of literary surgery. Wherefore let us not quarrel with the late Sir Beerbohm Tree for making a spectacle of "Henry VIII," with Henry Irving for reducing the twenty-six scenes of "King Lear" to sixteen or with anybody's Hamlet because it is not given complete, as Mr. F. R. Benson once gave it, "in six long, dismal hours." There is no space to comment on the wealth of Professor Odell's gatherings in later as well as in these earlier times. His book with its reproductions in picture is invaluable.

ANOTHER VOLUME OF "SHELBURNE ESSAYS"

ANOTHER volume of "Shelburne Essays" is always welcome and a matter of moment to readers who care for the better things in literature and for fresh and sane views on the tendencies of current thought. For Mr. Paul Elmer More is not only an independent student of the past, he is likewise an original thinker as to things of the present; and it is the combination of these two qualities which has given him his popularity alike as the sometime editor of what was once the best of our more intelligent weeklies and as an essayist whose essays, in the present volume reaching the eleventh series, have become one of the standard exhibits of the solidity and health of American criticism. As with the former volumes, the essays contained in this have been variously contributed to magazines or delivered in lectures as that on "The Spirit and Poetry of Early New England," which was one of the Turnbull lectures at Johns Hopkins University. The substance of the essays on Jonathan Edwards and Emerson was contributed, we are informed, to "The Cambridge History of American Literature." None the less it is good to have fugitive writings and utter-

ances such as these collected and revised in a form which has this final sanction of their author.

To demand continuity in a volume of collected essays would be as absurd as a like demand of the variety of conversation. Indeed, the essay is after all only glorified monologue and as dependent as the monologue on the personality of the man who talks. Mr. More hits a happy mean between the familiar essay, for success in which one must be born fascinating, and the formal essay, in which ministration at the high altars of criticism demands the sacerdotal trappings of the oracle. What is far more important than any manner is the matter and the angle from which things are observed. Mr. More has much to bring us, and he brings it always adequately, often delightfully.

As to the glorification of New England which has gone on now steadily since the Mayflower first anchored in sight of that "rock-ribbed shore," a cynic once remarked that it was justified by the necessity. The perfections of New England, in which the climate must always be considered and reprobated, are tiresome in their reiteration; the more so that all these praises are so undoubtedly based on "rock-ribbed" facts. One who is not a New Englander, except by summer occupation, sometimes wonders whether those really to the manner born protest so much.

But these remarks are irrelevant to the clear-sighted discussions of this part of Mr. More's book. However, while it may be just to consider the "poetry" of Mistress Ann Bradstreet or Urian Oakes with the allowance that it came out of an unpoetic stock, transplanted into an austere climate in which only the sternest of the virtues theologically watered could flourish, still, after all, is this kind of versified meditation and moralizing really poetry at all, and not rather the kind of thing which marks poetical negation? I believe that Thoreau somewhere indulges in an appreciation of the beauties of the music of an accordion. This passage is not a proof that Thoreau's Puritan nature was softened by the concord of sweet sounds. It merely shows that, true to his stock, there was no real music in him. One thing I must protest. No one of these old New England platitudes in verse is comparable to, much less referable in any wise to, "Nosce Teipsum," the fine philosophical poem of Elizabethan Sir John Davies. To read one page of Davies will settle that. But I note there, as very rarely, Mr. More has been betrayed by "a great authority." The comparison of Mistress Bradstreet to Sir John was the late Professor Wendell's, not Mr. More's.

Of the New England essays I like best that on Jonathan Edwards. Mr. More is at his best in

that difficult region in which philosophy abuts upon religion, and a clearer, a more justly sympathetic estimate of Edwards, who dwelt verily at the heart of Puritanism, might be sought for elsewhere in vain. There are some keen bits of insight, too, on the much overwritten topic, Emerson. What could be simpler, for example, than "Emersonianism may be defined as romanticism rooted in Puritan divinity?" or the thrust: "It is significant of this confidence in individual inspiration that generally in Emerson, as in other poets, it tends to looseness and formless spontaneity of style"? It is a genuine contribution, too, to our understanding of the Puritan spirit to have pointed out to us the parallel between Edwards in his "revolt against the practice of the communion as a mere act of acquiescence in the authority of religion" and Emerson's similar and equally logical revolt based in a disavowal of any conformity in faith and a demand in its stead of "the entire liberty of each soul to rise on its own spiritual impulses."

Among the essays dealing with later times, of Henry Adams possibly we have had enough and more than enough. Mr. More is very entertaining on that entertaining topic and even more so in "Samuel Butler of Erewhon," whose enigmatic personality emerges under the essayist's

hand in a way quite striking. Butler is of course a seasoning, not a food, but a condiment a taste for which is to be acquired. Mr. More helps in the acquisition and provokes in the reader of "Erewhon" and "The Way of All Flesh"—which is a detestable story, by the way—a desire to read further.

In "Evolution and the Other World," "Economic Ideals" and "Oxford, Women and God," the essayist touches some of the most important of our contemporary issues. The first of these declares very definitely against what is almost an obsession of our time, the application of the theory of evolution, usually as misunderstood, to things to which it is utterly inapplicable; although the essay very justly concludes with the remark: "It is not a new thing that a sound intuition should be supported by an untenable theory." In the last of these it is asked why the admission of women to Oxford's cloistered society and the banishment of God should have synchronized. But Mr. More is too wise a man to hazard an answer. Lastly, in "Economic Ideals" we have set forth our mania for combinations further to enhance mechanical mastery over nature and the contrasted mania for combinations to protect man as an individual from man as a machine. Most pertinently does the author ask if both are

not referable to that terrible uncertainty that haunts us day and night and if we have gained much in the substitution of this fear of our fellow man for the old-fashioned fear of God. These are great topics even to name in one paragraph. But be it remembered that a review is no real short cut, but only a guide post, pointing, let us hope, in the right direction.

A SOUND ENGLISH CRITIC

THIS volume is made up of a score of leaders and special articles, variously contributed by the author and now happily collected under a caption which, however, is somewhat misleading. For, save for two or three essays which have to do with reviewing, the critic and the labors of authorship, the book is less concerned with the art of letters than with English writers biographically and personally considered as well as appraised by way of their achievement in poetry and in prose. The work comes under that wide title, a book about English literature, and this generous subject extends from gossip to metaphysics, and from esthetic criticism all the way back to anecdotage. To those who really love books and the people who make them, to those who devoutly believe that, with all their shortcomings, the poetry, the novels and the letters of an age better represent its spirit than its history or its laws, no such book can be unwelcome. And Mr. Lynd's acquaintance with his subject-matter is as honest and complete as his views are sensible and helpful.

There is an unpretentiousness about this volume, too, which is pleasing. Here is no flourish by way of preface; a short dedicatory letter to a personal friend suffices. There is no putting of

the best foot forward, only a rough chronological ordering which places Mr. Pepys very inauspiciously in the lead, presented in one of his least really important aspects; however, it is one which, like the treasure of a Swiss villager, is noisomely heaped in the front yard for traveler and guest to stumble over. Mr. Lynd has not even assumed that his book is important enough to index, so that a reader might recur to something he liked. I recall how the *Nation* before the twilight of the godkins used to dilate on the choice corner reserved in the next world for such as published books unindexed. But I should rather lay this omission in the present case to modesty than to neglect, for after all it is assuming something in this day of hurry and reading by snatches to presuppose that sedulous pottering over a book which suggests the necessity of a complete and labored index.

Passing by one or two shorter pieces, the paper on Donne is of considerable fullness, emphasizing, as is the manner in these days, the actualities, the autobiographicalities, if one dare employ so lengthy a word. The eroticism of Donne needs not too strong an emphasis on the second syllable, for neither he nor his age was degenerate. This feature in Donne has always seemed to me a part of that experimental nature which was so essentially his. When Donne

studies the stars, he is apt to stray into astrology; science takes him into alchemy; theology even into the scrutiny at least of heresy and schism. So love, of which no English poet has left a purer, more ethereal, a more completely metaphysical conception, took Donne by the way into forbidden paths out of a species of curiosity rather than because of sensualism. Mr. Lynd is thus right in considering Donne "the supreme example of a Platonic lover among the English poets," as he is also just in recognizing in him "the completest experimenter in love."

A sympathetic piece of insight is the pleasant paper on Horace Walpole, who is aptly described as "a china figure of insolence," one who "lived on the mantlepiece and regarded everything that happened on the floor as a rather low joke." However, the author is not unjust to this "doer of little things in a little age," one only too appreciative of his own small place in the order of time. This idea of the miniature nature of the world of the eighteenth century recurs, much to the illumination of the subject. There is light in the designation of Cowper's genius as "not that of a poet, but of a letter writer," and it is interesting to be made to realize to what an extent Gray was a poet of the afterthought. He was years over the famous "Elegy," reaching a greater perfection with each revision. Has there ever been his

like in reticence since the beginning of time? Better provided with aunts—we may assume indulgent, affectionate, maiden, tea-drinking aunts—than any poet in English literature, Gray let no one of them, nor even his own mother know that he wrote poetry. Such, alas, was the soil of poetry in a genteel age! Mr. Lynd's excellent paper on Edward Young as a Critic will come as a surprise to some who feel that they know English literature. What could be better in these days of the unread and much belauded classics than this of Young? "The less we copy the renowned ancients, we shall resemble them the more. Become a noble collateral, not an humble descendant from them."

It is impossible to treat in so brief a space the many good things of this book. The author turns the tables neatly on certain conservative writers who have claimed that outspoken hater of war and injustice, Dean Swift, for their own. Even Coriolanus is shown not to be so certain an example for the Tory spirit to exult in. Mr. Lynd pursues an excellent, if somewhat unusual method, in the treatment of several authors of a certain complexity of nature. Instead of taking that complexity in all its difficulty and floundering in it, he views Shelley, for example, first startlingly though with entire justice, as "a character half-comic," secondly as "the ex-

perimenter," lastly as "the poet of hope." This gets us further in our understanding than Arnold's famous "beautiful and ineffectual angel," although it serves us with no such charming a literary label. I find, too, the treatment of George Meredith both suggestive and informing. His exotic, false pride and unadaptability of nature needs only to be thus clearly stated to carry with it conviction; and the emphasis on his Anglo-Irish blood explains much.

Passing the interesting papers on Mr. Saintsbury and Mr. Gosse, the two English critics whose roots are in the Victorian age, but who have survived adaptable and proficient in their art, and likewise omitting the just appraisement of some of our contemporary Georgians, Mr. de la Mare, Mr. Sassoon and some others, the final essays of this volume are taken up with the matters which give to the book its title. Mr. Lynd is orthodox in theory as to poetry, criticism and the like. But his orthodoxy is of the reasonable sort, and he is both willing and able to give an account of it. If we are to regard poetry, for instance, as a resolution of order out of the chaos of nature, it is fair that we recognize that this is an order "not imposed from without but controlled from within." The poet and not the grammarian is he who "sets up the rules." Mr. Lynd makes no objection to the idea that criti-

cism may be praise, but it must be the praise of that which in the product concerned is vitally praiseworthy. Correspondingly, he accepts the alternative function of blame; but blame of that wherein the thing may have fallen short of its own design, not blame that it fails to reach some extraneous and preconceived standard. As to the last paper on book reviewing, the present reviewer will lay it to heart, not so much that it differs in theory so much from his own orthodoxy in ideal and would-be practice, but that it is well to have the laws of Mount Sinai ever before us, however in the frailty of the flesh we may from time to time deviate from them.

SOME FORGOTTEN TALES OF HENRY JAMES

TWENTY years ago the present reviewer would have been more deeply interested in this book than he can feel himself today. At that period he was more "versed" in American fiction and likewise far better read in the short story. For those were the simple days when we fell into heated discussions as to the "bold realism" of "Daisy Miller" or the outspokenness of "The Rise of Silas Lapham" and wondered whether such things transcended—or fell below—the level of dignified art; whether Howells could hope to maintain the said literary level when "The Europeans" of Henry James appeared; whether a certain obscurity of diction was not a mark of distinction and the like. But much has passed in twenty years and, with many lesser things, both of these distinguished novelists, the American who elected to remain an American, and the American who heightened the Bostonian in his temperament by becoming a British subject.

Twenty years ago people wrote short stories in innocent oblivion of all the nice little rules and pretty little distinctions which have since been formulated and codified respecting this happy and lucrative branch of the writing of fiction. The momentous discovery that a short story is

not a story that is short, but a new genre—I had nearly written gender— in literature, only properly to be designated as a "short-story," or even more intimately a "shortstory," had not as yet been made. And the amiable gentlemen who, howsoever they do not themselves "short-story," none the less teach the new art by precept, correspondence and otherwise, had not as yet begun their chorus of tedious iteration.

The volume, "Master Eustace," follows "A Landscape Painter" in collecting five more stories of Henry James "which originally appeared in American periodicals," but which "for some reason unknown" were never issued by the author "in book form in this country." These stories will be welcomed by lovers of James and of good writing, and I take it that the two classes are very much the same; but they will be recognized by the judicious as of unequal merit. The writer of the preface to this volume, Mr. Mordell, is disposed to discover a projection of the author again and again in these tales. I cannot but think rather more highly of the art of Henry James than this. The greatest artist sees only with his own eyes, to be sure; but the very first condition of the art of fiction is that power of sympathy which enables the writer to sink himself in the point of view, if not in the personality, of personages of his creation. In

this very book the first story is told, and I should say effectively told, by an elderly observant lady attendant, and it properly exhibits the limitations of such a personality, not once transcending them. "A Light Man" once more derives its power, which is considerable, from the revelation of a selfish, petty and essentially dishonest personality who tells the story. I have never been wholly captured by Henry James, so that I bow joyfully under his yoke as under that of greater conquerors such as Hardy or George Meredith; but, remembering James in larger draughts than the lees of a small volume of neglected minor stories, I acknowledge in him a subtler artist than this.

"The less of a volume of neglected minor stories the better" is putting it strong. And yet nobody is likely to deny this as to the trivial, almost banal, "Theodolinde," a pot-boiler which the fastidious taste of the author of "The Portrait of a Lady" or "Europe," which Mr. Ford Maddox Hueffer calls "that most wonderful of all stories," would assuredly never have cared to see exhumed from the temporary pages of a certain American magazine; it would be invidious to say which. "Benvolio" is, to be sure, delightful, and I notice that it appeared twice in English reprints, evidently with the author's sanction. Indeed, a nice question might be raised here as to

an author's rights in posthumous suppression. Few modern writers have suffered from the reticence of editors, executors, publishers and the like. And the discarded leavings of great authors seem to possess a strange fascination for a certain type of mind, which might be described as Boswellian were to do so not an affront to an admirable man who knew what to do with a trifle when he had picked it up. No man can toil in the busy workshop of this life without scattering a few chips and leaving a few rough drafts and abortive sketches lying about after he has departed, and these, whether "escaped into print" or not, are only too often carefully gathered up and displayed in bulk windows to the discredit and scandal of his art. As to the stories of this volume, I have already said that they are unequal, although there is not one which has not that touch of distinction in style which makes the reading of Henry James a pleasure, whether you contrive to become interested in the story which he has to tell or not.

Not the least notable thing about this distinguished man of letters—this philosopher writing fiction as his famous brother, the psychologist, William James, was a novelist writing philosophy—is the circumstance that Henry James has enjoyed an enormous popularity for one who is, when all has been said, after all,

caviar to the general. As I look back at a random acquaintance with, I confess, only too few of the imposing list of the stories of James, short and long, I find myself recalling remarkably few of his personages which, with their adventures, are secondary to the personality of the novelist, which is always present in his work. Perhaps I have been unfair to Mr. Mordell in what I have written above; and that what strikes him in "Benvolio" as an autobiographical projection, so to speak, into the picture, is the very thing which I have just expressed somewhat otherwise. Here again an interesting query arises. Why do the strongest natures among writers so often shroud their personality in difficulty? For there is a certain difficulty in reading Henry James, exquisite though the medium in which he expresses his thought and certain as you can be that it is thought—never emptiness, as with some who are enigmatic—which he is expressing. I do not possess an answer offhand to this question, but I know that acquaintanceship with such is precious, for words, as this world goes, are less often the sumptuous raiment of a true nobility than a preposterously ample cloak in which to hide chattering beggary of thought.

Let us welcome, then, Master Eustace, somewhat unconvincing though that melodramatic young person remains, and let us accept "Long-

staff's Marriage," although we may be skeptical as to the symmetry of any story's working out like that in life. "Theodolinde" is forgivable for the charming description of a very pretty woman, and "A Light Man" is a fine, if forbidding, piece of psychological insight. But when my friend, Professor Phelps, declares that "even Thomas Hardy can hardly dramatize the irony of life more powerfully" than James does in this particular volume, I must protest even against Delphi. Whatever the truth is as to the larger canvases painted at length, in these lesser sketches in pencil of James there is none of the stroke, the bite, the deep velvet line of him who wrote "Life's Little Ironies."

THE VERITABLE QUEEN OF ENGLISH FICTION

THIS is a somewhat naive little book. After the many works which the fame of Jane Austen has attracted, books of criticism and appraisement, of collections and biography, after the publication long since of unfinished fragments, some of them never intended by the author for publication, and of such letters as a kind of prudery on the part of her sister, Cassandra, in particular, had not succeeded in destroying, we may certainly feel that we have harvested and gleaned up all on this subject that there was left for us to know. And it can as certainly not be said that Miss Austen-Leigh's volume has more than a few corroboratory crumbs to offer. And yet if the reader happens to be of that choice and devoted brother and sisterhood who feel, perhaps rather than know, that Jane Austen is, without question and compare, the veritable queen of English fiction, it is a joy to finger over these little personal things that once were hers, be they no more than a reproduction of the pleasing and well-known Zoffay portrait, penciled drawings of Steventon and Chawton, "accounts" from her father's Parish Register in her exquisite handwriting and charades—we should call them riddles—with which these cheer-

ful, gentlefolk of a simpler age beguiled the tedium of the long winter evenings when ways were foul and social life beyond the family circle impossible.

It is fair to say, however, that Miss Austen-Leigh has been urged to the pleasant task of compiling her little book, less to preserve such mementoes as these than to protest against a tendency in critical writings about her great kinswoman of late to appraise Jane Austen somewhat narrowly and in the direction of negation rather than by way of a reconstruction of what we have. Miss Austen-Leigh repels the accussation that Jane Austen did not love children, I should say, both successfully and conclusively. And taking a position, which I am sure most lovers of the delicate and consummate art of Jane Austen would think altogether unnecessary, Miss Austen-Leigh argues in one of her chapters for a certain serious intent which she finds in Jane's emphasis of repentance as a motive in most of her stories. The morality of the arts is always a dangerous subject; and there is a type of mind which remains unsatisfied with the play which does not preach and the novel which does not moralize. Jane Austen wrote no such improving books for the young and others as did her distinguished and forgotten contemporary, Hannah Moore, for example. But does Jane

Austen need justification along these lines, with her eye for truth, her power of analysis in a flash, her delicious wit and her sound heart? When Miss Austen-Leigh, in a chapter sagely headed "Morality," quotes Jane as writing "I am very fond of Sherlock's Sermons and prefer them to almost any," we wonder if she mentally added "sermons." Jane was quite capable of such an equivoke. The salt of a ready, wholesome wit was in her.

It seems that Jane Austen has been the subject of late of a dissertation. "*Sa vie et son oeuvre*" have been scrutinized "*par Leonie Villard, Agregée de l'Universite, Docteur es lettres,*" and the doctorate has been bestowed by the Sorbonne. One wonders how Jane would have received the news of so unheard-of a wonder. A woman doctor, too, at that. Now a doctor's dissertation is a grave matter, to the "docteur" and to others, and the "reaction"—as the psychologists have taught us to say—the reaction of a young French woman studying at Paris in 1915 to the novels of a young English woman of a century ago, whose subject was her own contemporary life in what was, after all, almost wholly the provinces, is decidedly interesting. I have unhappily not been able to see Mlle. Villard's thesis; but, of course, as Miss Austen-Leigh informs us, Mlle. thinks "Mees Austen" of a hun-

dred years ago narrow, parochial and wanting in religious feeling. She cites "authorities" to show that the Church of England was, in Miss Austen's day, "destitute of religious fervor," "a thing made up of traditional rites," wherefore no one of Miss Austen's novels deals with the salvation of a soul, we may suppose; and many other important things unknown to Jane and to her world are wanting. It is a prevalent doctoral temptation to judge a thing meticulously for what it is not and never could be; and this method of judgment is not confined to the doctoral thesis. Jane Austen did not travel; she ought to have traveled. She did not write romances, "historical romances on the house of Coburg," as suggested by the Prince Regent's librarian, Dr. Clarke; she had the good sense not to. But people who write historical romances are supposed to have a wide range of ideas. Jane Austen was not learned, nor a linguist, nor scientific, nor a poetess; ergo, she must have been narrow. And valiant Miss Austen-Leigh rushes to the defense to prove that her Jane knew a little French and a little less Italian, that she painted prettily, was a skilful needle-woman, wrote charades, was "the best musician in an unmusical family" and had really traveled as far as Bath and Southampton and even London.

Genius is not to be measured by these trivial standards. Let us be frank about it. The estimable provincial life of the gentry of the England of Jane Austen was narrow and restricted, intellectually, socially and spiritually. And Jane really "knew" no other life than that in which she had been reared. She shared in its limitations. I am willing to accept the somewhat splenetic report of Miss Mitford's mother that Jane was at one time "the prettiest, silliest, most affected, husband-hunting butterfly she ever remembered," remembering that the observer was herself young, perhaps not so pretty and not yet married. And I will also accept the very different remark of another young woman that "silent observation from such an observer (as Miss Austen) was rather formidable." This was, of course, much later. Allowing for the reticence in woman, which was then regarded as an eighth to the seven cardinal virtues, it is impossible to believe that so ready and witty a writer was not ready and witty in conversation, though Jane appears to have been a woman of kind heart and an admirable self-control. She was doubtless very variously estimated by those who knew her, and the gamut of her rich personality ranged all the way from a love of company and dancing to the deepest and tenderest insight into character and emotion. The candor of Jane

Austen's young people in their love of pleasure is delightful. Miss Kirkland has recently written a witty essay on "Victuals and Drink in Jane Austen." I hope that she may be prevailed on to write another on "Husband Hunting in Jane Austen." Why not accept the world as it is? It is because Jane Austen does precisely this, because she is interested in the trifles that go to make up daily life and character, because she is absolutely clear-sighted and a great artist in her power to transfer all this to her pages, that she is the inimitable novelist that she is. The measure of art is ever qualitative. Leave quantitative analysis to science. The subject is nothing; it is the degree to which the thing undertaken approaches perfection that counts. With the approach to perfection as our criterion, the degree of achievement in the thing undertaken, Jane Austen stands almost alone.

THE NEW STONE AGE

WHAT an anthropologist or an archæologist or other specialist might say about this book I have absolutely no means of determining. Exactly what I am to do with it is a question which only the completion of this review can tell. I am a layman, simple and innocent in this whole matter; innocent except for a big book, the title of which and its author I have forgotten after the manner of unscientific people. This was a book about round heads and long-headed people in a sense apparently very different from the historical roundhead or the business long-headed man. Another really delightful book of my reading was Mr. Osburn's about this very stone age, and, latterly, I have read the resumé of the whole subject so delightfully told by Mr. Wells in his "Outlines of History," so severely criticised by those who have not read it. I can see that I am properly one of Professor Tyler's readers of this pre-history, as he calls it, "intelligent and thoughtful," let me hope, and certainly "puzzled" in a multiplicity of "facts," at times, may I say it without offense, all but "smothered in surmise."

The most striking thing about a book such as this is the extraordinary conviction which it must carry, to the thinking man of the absolutely

provisional character of all our scientific learning. Here is the careful gathering together of an enormous mass of material, remains, shell, stone, metal, ceramic and other of man's prehistoric life on the globe, as variously described and interpreted by hundreds of investigators, with additional matter touching geology, geography, climate and all the sciences of life at one end, history, philology, language, folklore and religion at the other. It is fair to Professor Tyler to say that he warns the reader again and again of the uncertainties of interpretation, the incompleteness of knowledge, the dangers of inference and the like. The process of reading this book is like a perilous journey over floating cakes of ice with deep water and wide water yawning between. We are secure on a little island for a moment or two only to take a perilous leap to the next cake; we balance daintily on a neatly floating assertion or slip on an inference which we fear is going to topple over with us, only to repeat these dangerous leaps from one uncertainty to the next. I confess that when shore was reached—or was it only the bordering morass of the folklore margin of history?—I breathed a sigh of relief. But solid ground there can be none in such a subject. I wonder where solid ground is left us anywhere, for that matter. We used to find it in religion.

But there my solid ground was not your solid ground. We used to find it in the laws of gravitation. But Dr. Einstein with his doctrine of relativity has upset all that. We used to think that we were conveying a sort of solidity in knowledge to the young in our colleges and universities. But Mr. Edison tells us that college boys do not know anything. Do their professors? Does Mr. Edison? Science is coming be a disheartening affair.

Out of the water we came, out of the ooze and slime; onto the land, where we developed lungs; into the trees, where we developed hands and prehensile tails; out of the trees onto the ground, again, where we learned to walk upright and, I suppose, became apprehensive instead of prehensive. And now we go back into the water without gills and up into the air without organic wings. Cave dwellings, pit dwellings, lake dwellings, dolmens and other big stones and structures, for burial or ritual; shell implements, stone axes, flint knives, at last copper and bronze; so the ever-fascinating story runs with its inferences as to various races, their migrations, their modes of life, the routes of trade, their ideas and superstitions. The tale of prehistoric man is fascinating for what we know, even more so as to what we do not know. The most important steps seem the least certain. I cannot make out what

it is that distinguishes a man from an ape either in this book or in actual life for that matter. Has Gardner got us nearer the solution of the question how speech arises in man? Were there once talking apes? Were there speechless men? Or, harder to believe, speechless women? Is there a better story—or at least one more scientific—than that of Prometheus as to that momentous step, the discovery by man of the use of fire? Did property beget the idea of strongholds, or only the impulse of the hunted beast to escape an enemy? Things like this are discussed less in books of this kind than questions as to whence came the Aryans, for example. Professor Tyler registers carefully the wise words of warning, uttered long ago by Max Muller, as to the word Aryan; how it means "neither blood, nor bones, nor hair, nor skull," but merely language. But the rest of this very chapter generalizes at once as to races, customs, Celts, Indo-Europeans and the like. The origin of Aryan culture in the North, the East or the West seems a trivial matter. Suppose we can put the finger on the spot whereon lived the first Aryan family. Would it matter? And who was Mr. Aryan's grandfather? And, pray, what was Mrs. Aryan's mother's family after all? I rather suspect that this whole subject of origins in northern "kultur"

among the Germans is a learned bit of that propaganda to which the war opened our eyes. Professor Tyler has what seems to me a strange notion to the effect that the Teutonic stock "were never good mixers." Good mixers is precisely what they are. Goths, Vandals, Lombards, Northmen, Normans, Angles, all are Teutonic and all mixed admirably with whatever people they came into contact with, taking on new languages, customs and what not. The mixed blood of these, the ruling peoples of the earth, is their glory.

However it may beget question, it is just such popular gatherings-in and appraisements of what the learned world is doing that help us laymen in our doubts and therefore in our arduous steps in knowledge. It is interesting to know just what domestic animals the lake dwellers had, and it is pleasant to surmise the agricultural occupations of prehistoric woman. But I wonder who made the first needle or invented the safety pin which was not unfamiliar among the Etruscans. I am not sure that such questions are quite as profitable as surmises, between 6000 and 20,000 years, B. C., for the beginnings of Neolithic man. How we are obsessed with beginnings and endings! Perhaps there never was a first man, or he may have "occurred"

simultaneously or successively in a score of places and perhaps there is to be no end. The old philosopher who recognized only "becoming," an eternal state of change and flux, most closely guessed at truth. We are on our way, whence and whither? Do we know? We may guess theologically, scientifically or metaphysically; all these guesses are merely different points of view. Satisfying answer there is none. But why should anybody be satisfied?

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR ON EDUCATION

THIS is a book after my own heart. Have you ever held peculiar views for years and been looked at askance by your friends, smiled at indulgently, allowed for until you have become silent, not with the silence of acquiescence, but with the silence that comes from that terrible question: "What's the use?" Well, such is my case as to the schools as men have made them and as to the men who have made the schools. And here is one of the elect—for the elect are they who write in the *Atlantic Monthly* —who has justified my heresies, expressing in criticism upon criticism ideas which conform to convictions which I have long held and expressing them in a manner and with a charm which any man might well be proud to equal. I had read some of these chapters already in the *Atlantic*. They make a fine cumulative effect thus collected. Mr. Yeomans, we are told, is "a Chicago manufacturer of steam pumps, who enjoys playing the cello, sailing a boat along the New England coast in summer and passing the winter in California." But all this only partly describes him. Mr. Yeomans is a man with an eye for the significance of beauty, with a heart tender to the children on whom the absurdities

of our educational system heap many indignities, with a large apprehension of the greater things of life. I take my hat off to this book.

Mr. Yeomans, in discussing schools in general, declares that much of our human society "is still immersed in neolithic thought" and asks pertinently "what the proportion of discriminating and intelligent people is, who knows?" At the outset he recognizes two classes, "practical people whose mental structure is mechanical, * * * exploiters of men since all eternity," and "the emotional, the poetic, the artistic, the lovers of beauty and the distributors of a peculiar happiness." Boards of education, whether of college or school, seldom belong to the latter class, and superintendents and teachers—except for the few of the latter who escape—are herded along by the kind which chooses them. It is the mechanical group which is at present exploiting education and the momentary enthusiasm is charts, intelligence tests and percentages. Perhaps the next enthusiasm will be time clocks. Mr. Edison, we are told, conforms his labors to one. Much to the scandal of schools of pedagogy, Mr. Yeomans believes that a teacher is born, not manufactured, and should be taken, even uncertificated, when found, as a rare product. He has the audacity to doubt if a teacher can be turned out by means of courses in how to do it.

He even believes that "the life of a teacher may easily disqualify him to teach" and that information is the least important feature of education—pace Mr. Edison—when all has been said.

"This is rank educational bolshevism!" I hear the professor of class discipline exclaim to the superintendent of manual dexterity. "It is awful to think that there are such people outside of Russia, just as we had got everything into apple-pie order, everything nicely graded, a certified teacher in every class," not one of them, we may add, not properly vaccinated with the virus of pedagogic training.

Valiant is Mr. Yeomans' attack upon the idea, only too prevalent, that "the Way, the Truth and the Life are along a road that leads to recognition." In our colloquial phrase, "Ambition is the vice of noble minds." And we lay a stronger emphasis on the nobility than on the vice. Here in America we have come to consider life as a great game in which it is decent, of course, to observe the rules, but the object of which, after all, is to win. There is some good reading on this topic in this book. The author acknowledges the value of the game in maintaining morale, but confesses that the English sense of the game and ours give us a relish and a safety valve, so to speak, that makes for cleanness and health. But he adds, "The tendency to

surrender too much to group-loyalty, and to idolize victory and aggressiveness generally, is always present and often overshadowing. People 'determined to win' are hardly more wholesome than people unable to win, because in winning they usually lose more than they gain." The temptation to quote Mr. Yeomans in his pertinent and telling phrases is overpowering. His idiomatic sentences need no explication and cannot be paraphrased with any saving of words. With a world of wonder and romance about us, with nature in a thousand silent voices calling on us for a closer acquaintance, it seems shocking that man must herd under awnings and promenade on asphalt. Mr. Yeomans is a devotee of the out-door life, esteeming the naturalist the happiest of men. In two capital anecdotes which have the marks of actual experience upon them he tells of the paltry little schoolmarm who "taught geography, the geography of information," at a thousand a year, but knew not the alphabet of "the geography of inspiration." The other story is of an astronomer who startled his superintendent as well as a book agent by asking for a telescope with which to show the children the stars; not diagrams and ingenious textbooks, written for two bad purposes—to sell new, but to teach at second hand.

With so much that is good, it is difficult to pick and choose. Instances of Mr. Yeomans' felicity of phrase are these. Society's only applause for a man, he tells us, is "when he is seen running, like a tired dog, under a vehicle called a career." Or his remark concerning a "rather metallic" teacher of English, "just juggling English words." In that classroom "nothing alive is ever exposed." And he adds: "If you have not a lion concealed about your person, dear teacher, haven't you at least a rabbit?" An eloquent passage on this maligned and beautiful world of ours ends: "Steamers and trains poke painfully along like insects in high grass. In little spots, illumined by electricity and smudged with smoke there is a rather repulsive swarming of otherwise invisible human beings."

Among the many independent ideas which make up the all too brief pages of this book there seems to me none so suggestive as the chapter entitled "Cross-fertilization." Taking the ways of plant life in this regard, Mr. Yeomans asks why men may not profit by the example of nature. Shut up each class within itself, we tend to the perpetuation of our own limitations within our own species. The upper class established in its family, its social group, knows only its like. With children before sophistication's winged feet overtake them, there is no such

barrier as a little more wealth or a grade more luxury. And so between the middle and the lower classes. In fine scorn Mr. Yeomans tells of an old man who could conceive in his mind and build to completion a schooner, trim and capable, a thing of beauty, a mastery of the elements. And such a man is patronized as a laboring man by bank clerks and salesmen! It is one of the advantages of a sojourn in the country—the real country, not toy-shop suburbs—that you can meet there on terms of equality the man who toils with his hands and lives with nature. It is a beautiful thought, this of human cross-fertilization; the most ideal, the most liberal, the most democratic which I have come across for many a day.

PROFESSOR SANTAYANA ON AMERICAN OPINION

THIS book was originally addressed, we are informed, to British audiences in the form of lectures. But the subject, American life in its academic and intellectual phases, especially at Harvard, is even more immediately interesting to us who are of American birth. Professor Santayana possesses two advantages for his task, unusual in their combination, and these are his foreign blood and secondly his American academic associations. Born a Spaniard, Mr. Santayana was educated at Harvard and professed philosophy there for more than twenty years. Wherefore he is able alike to know, to sympathize, even at times to admire, and yet to view American, or at least New England character and philosophical opinion, from the vantage of a detached observer. In his preface he very aptly observes that such a work can hardly claim for itself truth because it enables us "to see ourselves as others see us," for in such cases it is the observer often who is better disclosed than the thing seen. And yet it is always an approximation at least to a better understanding of the realities to have them honestly and dispassionately discussed by one who combines a knowledge of the subject with a clear perception of its

relations and the radical detachment of essentially alien blood.

To the sanguine American spirit which is so passionately attached to the faith that rapid and continuous betterment is one of the certainties of human development, it will come as something of a shock to hear that "civilization is perhaps approaching one of those long winters that overtake it from time to time. A flood of barbarism from below may soon level all the fair works of our Christian ancestors, as another flood two thousand years ago leveled those of the ancients." And yet Mr. Santayana is far from hopeless as to the future; on the contrary he is full of illumination and recognition for the essential idealism of American character. While I doubt not that to the seasoned philosophic mind the gist of this book will be found in the fine chapters of analysis of the philosophies of the two notable Harvard philosophers, with both of whom the author was intimately associated, to the general reader and the journeyman reviewer it is the prospects, so to speak, by the way which allure. What could be a finer tribute to liberality, for example, than this on William James? "Nobody ever recognized more heartily the chance that others had of being right, and the right they had of being different." Or what shrewder observation could we have than this on

the associations of Josiah Royce with certain good folks whom we know are addicted to advanced thinking? "On current affairs his judgments were highly seasoned and laboriously wise * * * His reward was that he became a prophet to a whole class of earnest troubled people, who, having discarded doctrinal religion, wished to think their life worth living, when, to look at what it contained, it might not have seemed so." Mr. Santayana is often thus keen on the subconscious relations of the bed rock of the Puritan spirit to the discard of its forms. Wider in its reach is the observation that "hardly anybody, except the Greeks at their best, has realized the sweetness and glory of being a rational animal," and the recognition that out of the Hebraic idea of themselves as God's chosen people has arisen "that terrible interest in material existence," in material splendor which still haunts much of our Christian thinking as to the world to come. However, the author admits that "some detachment from existence and from the hopes of material splendor has indeed filtered into Christianity through Platonism."

Perhaps the reader does not feel out of his depth, or will not confess it. His reviewer is sputtering. Let us get back to the shore. In his chapter on academic environment, Mr. Santayana sets forth the difficulties of a philos-

opher—he might have added of any investigating scholar—in combining pure speculation with that "delightful paternal art," teaching. And he likens the latter to acting "where the performance often rehearsed, must be adapted to an audience hearing it only once." There is a further difficulty for the teacher, a further responsibility to his students, "he must neither bore, nor perplex nor demoralize them." It is a just observation that "while the sentiments of most Americans in politics and morals, if a little vague, are very constructive, the democratic instincts have produced a system of education which anticipates all that the most extreme revolution could bring about." The author finds in the preponderance of women among teachers of the young, in ambitious, easy and optional lessons, "divided between what the child likes now and what he is going to need in his trade or profession" the ever-increasing gulf between the intellectual and the practical life. Wherefore "a gentle contempt" on the part of the young American for the past and a kindly regret for the poor old fellows who had no chance to live in our incomparable age. Wherefore, likewise, American intelligence is largely absorbed in what is not intellectual, father finding his recourse in business, the women and children in various forms of frivolity and play. It is in this cleavage that our

want of any real society really lies; for such society as we have is distinctly unintellectual and frivolous, while our intellectuality in its associations remains quasi-professional and unsocial. To return to education, Mr. Santayana aptly remarks that anything might have been taught in the liberal curriculum of the Harvard of his day. "You might almost be an atheist, if you were troubled enough about it." Still, a certain sense of duty and decorum reigned over all and, he wittily concludes, "a slight smell of brimstone lingered in the air."

Mr. Santayana's last chapter is entitled "English Liberty in America," and in it he pays a fine tribute to the "eminence in temper, good will, reliability, accommodation" in which alone can we hope for the development of a real democracy. To dominate the world by co-operation is better than to dominate it by conquest; experiment in government is safer and likely to prove in the end more efficient than government by inspiration. "Free government," the author tells us elsewhere, "works well in proportion as government is superfluous." "In America there is but one way of being saved, though it is not peculiar to any of the official religions which themselves must silently conform to the national orthodoxy or else themselves become impotent and merely ornamental. This national faith

and morality are vague in idea, but inexorable in spirit; they are the gospel of work and the belief in progress. * * * American life is free as a whole, because it is mobile * * * In temper America is docile and not at all tyrannical; it has not predetermined its career, and its merciless momentum is a passive resultant." "Certainly absolute freedom," he concludes, "would be more beautiful if we were birds or poets; but co-operation and a loving sacrifice of a part of ourselves—or even of the whole save the love in us—are beautiful, too, if we are men living together." I make no apology for quoting thus frequently from this suggestive, this sound and sweet-tempered book. Where thought it so completely and yet unsuperfluously clothed in the raiment of apt words there is no other way. Mr. Santayana's style is as attractive as his ideas are stimulating and allaying.

LIST OF BOOKS REVIEWED

E. V. Lucas, "Adventures and Enthusiasms."
Mrs. R. Clipston Sturgis, "Personal Prejudices."
Agnes Repplier, "Points of Friction."
Winifred Kirkland, "The View Vertical."
Samuel McChord Crothers, "The Dame School of Experience."
Douglas Goldring, "Reputations, Essays in Criticism."
Edwin W. Morse, "Life and Letters of Hamilton W. Mabie."
William Roscoe Thayer, "The Art of Biography."
Rose Macaulay, "Potterism."
Joseph Conrad, "Notes on Life and Letters."
E. W. Howe, "The Anthology of Another Town."
Carl Sandburg, "Smoke and Steel."
Alfred Noyes, "Collected Poems," Volume III.
John Masefield, "Right Royal,"
"Enslaved and Other Poems."
Edwin Arlington Robinson, "Lancelot, a Poem."
George E. Woodberry, "The Roamer and Other Poems."
George P. Baker, "Modern American Plays."
John Drinkwater, "Mary Stuart, a Play."
Gilda Veresi, "Enter Madame, a Comedy."
Odin Gregory, "Caius Gracchus."
Sacha Guitry, "Deburau, a Comedy, translated by Grenville Parker."
Romain Rolland, "Liluli, a Farce."
Michael Strange, "Clair de Lune, a Play."

LIST OF BOOKS REVIEWED

Eugene O'Neill, "The Emperor Jones."
George C. D. Odell, "Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving."
Paul Elmer More, "A New England Group and Others."
Robert Lynd, "The Art of Letters."
Henry James, "Master Eustace."
Mary Austen-Leigh, "Personal Aspects of Jane Austen."
John Tyler, "The New Stone Age in Northern Europe."
Edward Yeomans, "Shackled Youth."
George Santayana, "Character and Opinion in the United States."

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